Implementing Asset-Based Community Development: A Case Study from the Philippines

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of

Master of Philosophy in Development Studies

Massey University
Palmerston North, New Zealand

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2005

ABSTRACT

Within the alternative development paradigm, needs-based models have been critiqued for the part they play in accentuating local deficiency and thereby increasing dependency on externally-driven development. The asset-based approach to community development (ABCD) has been presented as a capacities-focused alternative, aimed at establishing community-driven development and promoting authentic local empowerment.

This thesis presents a case study into ABCD as it has been applied in a developing country context, analysing it in relationship to some of the theoretical premises of the approach and the wider development literature. The research, undertaken on the island of Mindanao in the Philippines, describes how the ABCD model was implemented and adapted to local circumstances. The findings indicate that the ABCD intervention resulted in improvements within the case study community, particularly pertaining to the expansion of community facilities, livelihood choices, household incomes, individual and collective motivation, and community pride.

Overall, this study endorses ABCD as an effective approach to development in the developing world, while at the same time highlighting issues associated with its implementation. Questions are also raised regarding three global development themes that emerged in the course of the study, namely the development of capacity, the management of social process and the meaning of empowerment.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am appreciative toward the people of Midkiwan on the island of Mindanao for what was a warm and friendly welcome to a strange Kiwi who happened into their community one afternoon in June 2004. The completion of this research project is due to their co-operation, and their thoughtful and candid reflections. One resident challenged me when she asked if I considered the people there poor compared with the people in New Zealand. At the risk of appearing both patronising and clichéd, it must be acknowledged that despite their material impoverishment the residents of this locality possess a remarkable richness of spirit and strength of community that made a strong impression on me. I thank them sincerely.

I am grateful to the staff of Xavier University College of Agriculture in Cagayan de Oro, and in particular Rachel Polestico, who made every effort to assist me to carry out the research programme and to host me in the warm-hearted Filipino style. I recognise the pioneering work of institutions such as Xavier University in seeking out cutting-edge models of community development and in displaying a profound commitment to poverty alleviation in the Philippines. I thank my fellow classmates from many developing countries who shared with me the learning journey into Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) provided to us by the staff members of the Southeast Asia Rural Social Leadership Institute (SEARSOLIN) in the Philippines. The warm friendships that have resulted are an inspiration for further multi-cultural learning.

I recognise with gratitude the support of Massey University in making the resources available to me to complete this thesis. I thank my supervisors, Professor John Overton and Dr. Manu Barcham, for their guidance, humour and many lively discussions. They challenged me to extend my thinking and further my abilities and I value this mentoring. I appreciate the comradeship, support and sense of fun displayed by my colleagues in the Development Studies Institute at Massey University. It has been a privilege to work alongside and learn from these dedicated people. I wish to acknowledge the invaluable

technical support made available by Ri Weal, and editing assistance provided by Karen Beard, in the final preparation of this thesis.

I acknowledge the support and encouragement of my daughters, my friends, my mother and my family. Their confidence in my ability to complete this project has been, as ever, invaluable.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABCD	Asset-Based Community Development
ANEC	Affiliated Non-Conventional Energy Centre
BCC	Basic Christian Communities
BBC	Barangay Bayanga Council
BEC	Basic Ecclesiastical Communities
BDC	Barangay Development Council
CART	Centre for Appropriate Rural Technology (XUCA)
CCFT	Christian Children's Fund Taiwan
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency (United States of America)
CO	Community Organiser
CSFLO	Child Sponsorship Family Liaison Officer
DA	Department of Agriculture (Philippines)
DANCHURCHAID	Danish Church Aid (Denmark)
DE	Department of Education (Philippines)
DOH	Department of Health (Philippines)
DSWD	Dept of Social Welfare and Development (Philippines)
FTC	Food Technology Centre (XUCA)
HPI	Heifer Project International
KIs	Key Informants
KKP	Kristohanong Katilingban sa Pagpakabana (Christian Community Involvement)
MICODA	Midkiwan Community Development Association
MYMA	Midkiwan Youth Movement Association
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
SAC	Sustainable Agriculture Centre (XUCA)
SEARSOLIN	South East Asia Rural Social Leadership Institute (XUCA)
SLF	Sustainable Livelihoods Framework
XSF	Xavier Science Foundation (XU)
XU	Xavier University - Ateneo de Cagayan
XUCA	Xavier University College of Agriculture

CHAPTER ONE: AN INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1950-1960 *Do development to the people*

1960-1970 *Do development for the people*

1970-1980 *Do development through the people*

1980-1990 *Do development with the people*

1990-2000 *Empower the people for development. The focus is now on developing local capacity for self-development. For the first time people are seen as the primary focus and owners of the development process*

(Booy and Sena, 2000, quoted in Foster and Mathie, 2001:1)

THE RATIONALE AND CENTRAL FOCUS OF THE STUDY

Booy and Sena succinctly capture the background to, and signal the direction of, development thinking in the 2000-2010 decade. Despite widely contested theoretical and practical interpretations, there is a growing consensus that the appropriate agents of development are people themselves. Thus current approaches to community development aim to actively engage local people in sustainable development programmes that meet human needs, reduce poverty and empower communities. The increasing interest in community empowerment as a goal in its own right has led to a search for development models that effectively hand over decision-making power and control to local residents, and ensure that it stays there.

People-centred development, emerging in the late 1970s, has traditionally been aimed at meeting basic human needs. While incontestable at a moral level, this goal has had an inadvertent tendency to produce disempowerment at an operational level. A focus on local needs, and the often long litany of accompanying problems, can unintentionally lead a community to lose sight of its existing resources, strengths and problem-solving capacity, and come to view itself as deficient and defective. The tendency is to compare one's

community unfavourably with others and rely increasingly on external intervention, thus undermining the sustainability of development initiatives. An example from an aid organisation in Aotearoa/New Zealand may help to illustrate this point. In a recent appraisal of the New Zealand Agency for International Development's needs-based initiatives in Kiribati, the review team discovered that an entrenched local culture of helplessness and dependency had developed, accompanied by community and institutional inertia. These factors were seen to be constraining the effectiveness of development efforts in this small Pacific Island nation (NZAID, 2002:3).

Based on research into the characteristics of successful community initiatives in the United States of America (USA), Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) is an alternative model that has been developed to address the unintentional negative effects of needs-based approaches. ABCD aims to assist residents in a locality to identify and value the strengths and assets that already exist within their communities, and to mobilise these as a basis from which to plan, implement and maintain future development. The approach recognises that the capacity of local people and their social networks builds powerful communities. This internal impetus must be captured and utilised if development efforts are to succeed long-term. ABCD thus aims to pre-empt the growth of a deficiency/dependency culture by initiating a capacities focus. The overall intention of this approach is sustainable development owned and driven by members of the local communities themselves.

ABCD originated in the American neighbourhood renewal movement. As such, the approach assumes that civil society, democratic participation and access to resources are already developed in a community to some extent. As a model specifically designed to counter dependency by fostering an endogenous development process based on the strengths inherent in a community, the approach has aroused increasing interest amongst international development practitioners. Several projects pioneering the model are currently underway in the developing world. The study presented in this thesis thus set out to investigate and evaluate how ABCD works in practice when applied to a developing country community. The research, undertaken in a small, rural

locality on the island of Mindanao in the Philippines, pays particular attention to the implementation process and the outcomes to date. The overall intention of the study is to add insights regarding the application of ABCD within a developing country setting and to contribute to the field of inquiry concerning effective community development processes.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY

The Conceptual Framework

ABCD is an evolving approach that proposes the utilisation and integration of various strands of complementary development thinking and practice that have emerged in the people-centred era (Mathie and Cunningham, 2003a:475). Seven of these related concepts that underpin the ABCD approach have been discerned to form a conceptual framework for this thesis. These are ABCD as the expression of a renewed emphasis on community-level development; ABCD as the actualisation of the agency of civil society; ABCD as community-centred development; ABCD as a critical response to needs-based approaches; ABCD as an assertion of a capacities-based alternative; ABCD as a working implementation of assets theories, particularly with regard to the sustainable livelihoods approach; ABCD as a practical application of social capital theory.

The Methodological Framework

Five of the seven premises identified above have been selected to form a methodological framework for the case study investigation and analysis. Specifically these are ABCD as an application of social capital and assets theories, as capacities-focused and community-driven development, and as an expression of the agency of civil society.

ABCD AND GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT THEMES

A thesis such as this inevitably reflects the researcher's philosophical orientation. In the course of this study into the potential of ABCD in developing countries, a number of what might be termed inter-related global development themes appeared pertinent. The ideas, introduced below, are to some extent woven throughout the thesis but will be returned to in detail in the concluding chapter. These overlapping concepts encompass the development of capacity,

the notion of development as a process-oriented endeavour and the meaning of empowerment.

The Development of Capacity

Although characterised by tensions between theoretical and methodological approaches, and functional and emancipatory interests, the development of people's abilities and skills, their capacities, is an increasingly important development concept (Black, 2003:117). Under an assets approach practitioners will work with complex and ambiguous situations that characterise human interaction in communities. However, the implications of the dynamics of social interaction are often overlooked by many involved in the practice of development. Chambers (1983, 1993, 1997) and Kaplan (1999, 2000), among others, have contributed significantly to understanding the role that development practitioners themselves play in the process of capacity building. Practitioners, working with people in the people-centred era, must increasingly focus on developing interpersonal and relationship-building skills This requires the clarification of personal values and assumptions that they bring to the work, and an understanding of how their actions impact on others. Capacity building thus implies a parallel learning process focused as much on the practitioner's development as on the growth of recipient people.

The Social Processes of Development

In an associated field, the assets-based approach focuses particular attention on the social processes of development. This includes not only interactions between donors, agents, practitioners and community leaders, but also, and more significantly, inter- and intra-community connections. Social process has tended to be neglected in development theory and practice (Mosse, 1998:5), perhaps because it is not easily subjected to the reductive, materialist traditions of the field; perhaps because as Kaplan (2002:xiv, paraphrasing Schon, 1991) highlights, the social is not so much problematic as characterised by messy and indeterminate situations. Korten (1980, 1986) was one of the first practitioners to balance the product orientation of development projects by including a focus on the processes that lead to the achievement of that end-product. A number of theorists have developed the discourse in a variety of directions (Chambers,

1983, 1993; Mosse et al., 1998; Rondinelli, 1993; Veneracion, 1989). In particular, Kaplan (1996, 2002) has done much to challenge the tendency to reduce development to a product-oriented, technical operation that attempts to control. He promotes instead a full embrace of the complexity of the processes of social transformation.

The Meaning of Empowerment

Emerging from basic needs and participation debate in the 1980s and 1990s, empowerment is the epitome of the development-from-below approach (Overton and Storey, 2003:29). At the centre of the discourse is a tension between a reformist, functional viewpoint, and the intrinsic meaning of empowerment as a transformative, emancipating process needing no justification. Botchway (2001:146) has argued that empowerment, as incorporated into the development industry, reflects a blindness to wider socio-economic processes that contribute to the need for development. Friedmann (1992:10) maintains that empowerment can be defined as a moral claim of the disempowered poor against existing hegemonic power. In facilitating community-directed development, ABCD aims to empower local communities as a goal in its own right (Cunningham et al., 2003:19). The approach implies the delivery into the hands of residents in a locality, not merely influence, but the power and the capacity to decide for themselves what local development will constitute. While most will "nod sagely" as Davies and Mills (1999:170) put it, in support of such an aim, the practicality and the political implications of this agenda are complex and ambiguous.

AN OUTLINE OF THE THESIS

The thesis is presented in seven chapters. Chapter One has offered a rationale for the study, an introduction to its conceptual framework and central questions, and the identification of relevant interwoven themes. The historical context and theoretical premises of ABCD are elaborated in Chapter Two, along with related ideas from contemporary international literature. In Chapter Three the reader is introduced to the locality in which the case study was undertaken. Chapter Four focuses on the design of the research and includes a discussion of philosophical and ethical considerations, and an outline of the study's central

questions, case study methodology, methodological framework and research methods. In Chapter Five, a detailed description of the research programme and its findings is provided. A critical discussion of the findings in relationship to the inquiry's methodological framework and central questions is presented in Chapter Six. Chapter Seven offers a wider reflection on the premises of ABCD that constitute the conceptual framework of this thesis, and on the underlying themes that have emerged during the course of the study.

CHAPTER TWO: ABCD IN PERSPECTIVE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter is primarily intended to review the theoretical foundations of the ABCD approach and thus provide the reader with an appreciation of the background to the research programme and its particular foci of inquiry. A secondary purpose is to outline ABCD as a community development model, thereby setting the scene for subsequent chapters that describe and discuss detailed research into the approach. In this chapter, therefore, the alternative development paradigm is described briefly to situate the thesis within an historical context and to trace the impetus that has prompted the development of ABCD. The assets approach is then reviewed within the conceptual framework of the thesis, relating the foundational premises of the ABCD approach to the wider development literature.

ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT: PEOPLE NOT PROJECTS

The Emergence of People-Centred Development

The theoretical context that underpins this study can be traced to the 1970s when the emergence of an alternative position tendered an irresistible challenge to the current development orthodoxy. Overton and Storey (2003:4) frame alternative development as a "fragmented collection of critiques" offered by a range of development practitioners and Third World commentators (Chambers, 1983; Edwards, 1989; Freire, 1972, 1973; Korten, 1980; Sen, 1981; Rahnema, 1986; Schumacher, 1973) critical of the failures of the top-down tradition in developing countries and sharing a concern for the human impact of development. While seeking many of the same goals as mainstream development, such as economic growth and modernisation, alternative approaches emphasised development practice that was more participatory, equitable, sustainable and empowering.

Refocus on the Local: Development from Below

The policies of top-down development were rejected for the role that they had played in suppressing the social forces of localism and in homogenising diverse local needs. International development agencies, led by the World Bank, began

to move toward direct redistributive measures that directly targeted poverty and the basic needs of the poor instead of continued reliance on the indirect, trickle-down effect of economic growth (Brohman, 1996:204). This bottom-up approach relied much more heavily on the skills and voices of people in the areas being developed, often with the support of national and international non-government organisations (NGOs) (Corbridge, 1995:8). With this change in direction came a focus on small-scale projects sited at the local level and linked to rural development initiatives or urban community-based programmes (Schwartz, 1978:237). Durning (1989:8-9) notes the rising number of local groups compared with traditional development organisations and the mass political movements of earlier times. While commenting on what he terms its unrealistic rhetoric, he claims a pragmatism for development from below focused on locally appropriate development and concerned with self-help. Adams (2001:334) argues, however, that localism is a neo-populist concept of development, "a strange marriage of neo-classical economic thinking and community based development".

A Revival of Community Development

The impetus generated by development from below has brought a renewal of interest in local communities and the participation of their residents in development initiatives. Oakley (1998:366) pinpoints a revival of community development as beginning in the 1970s, gathering momentum in the 1980s and being substantially consolidated in the 1990s. Craig (2003:3) maintains that its restoration serves two agendas. One is based on addressing the needs of a neo-liberal economy, such as the impetus to decentralise governance and devolve state responsibility for development to the local level. The other addresses social needs from a social democratic tradition, attempting to reconcile the contradictions of the top-down and bottom-up approaches to enrich representative democracy. Many of the contradictions of this mixed mission are addressed in the remainder of this chapter.

ABCD Situated within the Alternative Development Paradigm

The emergence of ABCD can be viewed as an expression of the recent trend toward local level development. Mathie and Cunningham (2003a:475) position

the ABCD approach as a coherent conceptual framework for tying together various complementary strands of innovative development practice that have emerged in the people-centred era. ABCD thus reflects several of the essential principles of alternative development and makes use of the theoretical insights generated. It can be viewed as an expression of an increasing emphasis on community participation and, therefore, encompasses theorising about the agency of civil society and locality-driven development. ABCD is positioned as a critical response to the needs-based, problem-solving orthodoxy and as an assertion of capacities-based alternatives. It is promoted as a practical application of assets-based approaches, in particular the sustainable livelihoods model, and as a means of operationalising social capital theory.

ASSET-BASED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT (ABCD)

Introduction

Mathie and Cunningham (2003b:1) maintain that, as an alternative to needs-based approaches and consistent with the current political, economic and institutional contexts of community development, ABCD has attracted a small but dedicated following among North American community development practitioners. ABCD can be understood as an approach to community development, as a set of methods for community mobilisation and as a strategy for community-driven economic development (Cunningham et al., 2003:1). As an approach, ABCD rests on the principle that the recognition of strengths within a community is more likely to inspire positive action for change than an exclusive focus on deficits. Although not intended to deny the reality of needs and problems in communities, it accentuates the productive potential of community capacity, internal relationships and local associations.

The approach is accompanied by a set of methods. These were initially presented by ABCD designers Kretzmann and McKnight (1993:345), as a series of sequential activities. They have since been refined by a range of development practitioners utilising aspects of the ABCD approach in the developed and developing worlds (Bergdall, 2003; Booy and Sena, 2000, 2001; Cunningham et al., 2003; Mathie and Cunningham, 2003a, 2003b, 2003c; Mercado and Polestico, 2001). The remainder of the chapter focuses on ABCD

as an approach to community development. A detailed description of ABCD methodology is presented in Chapter Five within the context of the case study research. A brief discussion of ABCD as a strategy for local economic growth is provided in a later section (see page 21).

The Conceptual Premises of ABCD

For the purposes of this study, seven theoretical premises that inform the ABCD approach have been discerned from the literature.

1. ABCD as an expression of a renewed emphasis on community development
2. ABCD as an expression of the agency of civil society
3. ABCD as a vehicle for community-driven development
4. ABCD as a critical response to needs-based development
5. ABCD as an assertion of capacities-focused development
6. ABCD as an application of assets-based approaches
7. ABCD as an application of social capital theory

These seven premises form a conceptual framework for the following review. ABCD principles and methods, and various theoretical and practical issues associated with the approach are discussed in relationship to contemporary development literature. The discussion focuses particularly on the implementation of the ABCD approach in international development.

1. ABCD as an Expression of a Renewed Emphasis on Community Development

Significant economic, political and social changes across the globe underscore the move to community-level intervention (Campfens, 1997:439-459; Mayo and Craig, 1995b:105-109; Warkentin, 2001:1). Neo-liberal monetarist policies of the 1990s, implemented through Western economic liberalisation and Third World structural adjustment programmes, have undermined the politics of social democracy that legitimised the rise of the welfare state. This has resulted in a weakening of the contract that gave central governments responsibility for the provision of community needs, accompanied by a corresponding trend towards decentralisation, especially related to governance and social development

(Mathie and Cunningham, 2003a:474; Tadashi and Ashizawa, 2001:201). Alternatives located in civil society, defined by Walzer (1995:7) as that realm of collective public action between the private sphere and the state, [1] are favoured because they make greater use of the voluntary sector and are seen to promote self-reliance, foster enterprise and counter dependency. As well, they are viewed as a cheaper option, draw more on cost-effective business management principles and underscore the ideology of market-led practice. The processes of decentralisation and democratisation in the developing world are viewed as strengthening the agency of civil society, increasing political participation and leading to more accountable forms of governance at local levels (Mathie and Cunningham, 2003a:474; Hintjens, 1998:284; Shuman, 1994:5,55,58).

During the last forty years, the rapid pace of urbanisation has resulted in an increasingly diverse cultural composition in localities and changes in traditional community life (Green and Haines, 2002:201-203; Shuman, 1994:61). The technological revolution in transport and communications has facilitated an increased ability and willingness for citizens to participate in national and international affairs. This is reflected in a rapidly growing voluntary sector (Shuman, 1994:54-55), and a burgeoning literature focused on global civil society and transnational social movements (Baker, 2002; Florini, 2003; Frost, 2002; Keane, 2003). Conversely, in the face of global complexities there is also a re-emphasis on problem-solving and action by people at the local community level (Campfens, 1997:32-33; Mayo and Craig, 1995b:106).

Against this backdrop, Oakley (1998:366) notes the replacement of centrally-driven development initiatives with a more locality-based, political and power-focused perspective. Campfens (1997:14) theorises that community development in the international context is moving rapidly out of the era of the nation state toward a global society dominated by regional market economies and growing interdependence. Economic liberalisation and communications

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[1] Walzer (1995:7) defines civil society as the space of uncoerced human association and the set of relational networks, formed for the sake of the family, faith, interest and ideology, that fill this space. DeLue's (2002:346) definition points to the sphere of voluntary associations within the space existing between the individual and the national government. For further discussion of the concept, see page 12.

advances are thus utilised for their role in increasing opportunities for decentralised economic development (Mathie and Cunningham, 2003a:474; Shuman, 1994:60). In the international development field, community development is positioned within the context of, and as a developing response to, increasing poverty and social exclusion, and to circumvent the neo-liberal reduction in state-provided resources (Green and Haines, 2002:201-220; Mayo and Craig, 1995a:3; Platteau and Gaspart, 2003:1687). Campfens (1997:442) argues that the central purpose of community development in the new era should be to mobilise and nurture communities. It should be a fluid, experimental and subjective process aimed at promoting local empowerment, collaborative relationships, human rights, social justice and environmental protection (Campfens, 1997:462-468; Durning, 1989:53; North Shore Council of Community and Social Services, 1995:2; Shuman, 1994:38-53).

Robinson (1995:22) proposes a paradigm shift for community development as a consequence of the emerging aspirations discussed above. Community is redefined as a face-to-face association within caring neighbourhoods. It is characterised by individual liberty to act, community control, open access to knowledge, specialised micro-enterprise and global interconnections. As an emerging approach to international development, ABCD is viewed as consistent with this paradigm shift (Foster and Mathie, 2001:1,7). By accessing social and material assets in a community, it aims to realise the transformative potential of community development and empower communities to survive and flourish in the new social order.

2. ABCD as an Expression of the Agency of Civil Society

In the era of global capitalism and a decentralising state, there is renewed interest in the participation of citizens within the broad spectrum of civil society, [2] and a corresponding search for accountable forms of participatory local governance (Hudock, 1999:51; Kaldor, 2003:1-4; Khilnani, 2001:12). Mathie and Cunningham (2003b:7) posit that these developments have the potential to

[2] For a lucid overview of the history of the idea of civil society and six competing conceptualisations evoked in current development discourse, see Van Rooy (1998a:6-30).

re-politicise the concept of participation in development, reactivate debates about the rights conferred by citizenship and expand the political arena currently occupied by civil society. They draw on Edwards (1999:147-148) who has suggested that civil society performs essential functions in humanising capitalism and diluting its effects on poor people. It is said to nurture the social and economic assets that exist in economically disadvantaged communities and generate the conditions that enable people to advance their interests.

However, locating its roots in competing Western political philosophies and citing an ensuing voluminous literature, Harvey (1997:8-13) argues that the concept of civil society is characterised by conceptual vagueness and analytical ambiguity. It serves both neo-liberal and neo-populist agendas as a tool for analysing the space between family and society. He points out that there is little detailed evidence of the mechanisms through which civil society is expected to fulfil the roles envisaged for it. In treating civil society as an unproblematic concept and a technical fix, critics (Howell and Pearce, 2002:1-3; Van Rooy, 1998b:200) argue that development agencies ignore its power dimensions. The concept is thereby depoliticised, and its potential to create a genuine intellectual and political forum is reduced. There is a danger that community level organisations will be co-opted as conduits for aid assistance, in much the same way that NGOs have come to be viewed as subsidiaries of the state and the development industry (Tadashi and Ashizawa, 2001:25).

The withdrawal of the state has also raised the prospect of civil society as an alternative means to further democracy, especially in countries where the expression of this sector has been historically weak (Baker, 2002:170; Florini, 2003:209; Silliman and Noble, 1998b:306). However, a range of theorists (Burkey, 1993:69; Dore and Mars, 1981:3; Green and Haines, 2002:15) have highlighted the assumption that poor people in developing countries possess the skills and understandings to participate in a democratic process. Thus, Tadashi and Ashiwana (2001:21-22) promote the role of civil society in assisting citizens to make the psychological transformation from an authoritarian to a democratic mindset. NGOs and voluntary associations are understood to be an instrument for developing democratic values such as increased tolerance, and

an appreciation of the rights and responsibilities of democratic citizenship. Drawing on Tocqueville (1835,1840), Diamond (1994:7-8) asserts that the associational life of civil society can be a practical training ground for democracy. Membership of voluntary associations is thought to stimulate political participation, build capacity and increase the efficacy of citizens.

Mathie and Cunningham (2003c:7) claim that the ABCD approach actualises this new role for civil society. Cunningham et al. (2003:10,19) position it at the intersection of participatory development and assets approaches, helping to define where citizens can effectively participate in development. ABCD is positioned in a middle ground between state and market, "where the logic of competition meets and mixes with the logic of co-operation" (Edwards, 1999:162). Practitioners are expected to balance the opportunities and constraints of economic development, and utilise social assets to realise community potential, claim the entitlements of citizenship and create collaborative partnerships with external institutions. ABCD thus promotes a pro-active role for civil society, mobilised at the associational level.

3. ABCD as a Vehicle for Community-Driven Development

Local-Level Organistions

As an expression of the participatory paradigm, community development facilitated through community-based organisations has a long history.[3] Esman and Uphoff (1984:40-41) note that these organisations were originally assigned an intermediary role in articulating local needs and mobilising community experience. Recent trends toward locality-based approaches can be viewed as an expression of the continuing search for forms of development that create change from the ground up and thus are more likely to lead to genuine empowerment (Campfens, 1997:16). Green and Haines (2002:72-73,196) maintain that community-based organisations do not fit neatly into traditional categories, have several contradictory purposes and struggle with the meaning

[3] For brief reviews of the rise of local organisations in the developing world, see Durning (1989:8), Esman and Uphoff (1984:40-41) and Johnson and Clark (1982:34). For a history of community-based organisations in the USA, see Green and Haines (2002:3-77) and Mico (1981:3-6).

of community control. However, they offer several advantages for carrying out programmes compared to non-local organisations. They are rooted in a place, promote internal goals, have extensive local contacts and are controlled by residents. The crucial function they perform in integrating sustainability is also accentuated.

The development of relationships and social networks within a community is a core principle of ABCD (Cunningham et al., 2003:7). Formal and informal social organisations are assigned a central role aimed at stimulating action and organising for mutually beneficial development activity (Mathie and Cunningham, 2003a:479-480). The ABCD model hinges on the establishment of an overarching development organisation to manage the process and ensure that it remains locally controlled, with external agencies in a support role. This foundational association is expected to sustain the development process over time and extend its gains. Green and Haines (2002:12) maintain that under an assets model, community organisations also have a significant role to play in building local capacity and assets.

Community Division

Dore and Mars (1981:32,39) and Adams (2001:337) draw attention, however, to a lack of reconciliation between the ideology of community development - spontaneous, flexible, local initiatives and decentralised decision-making - and the reality of local conditions. Most communities are characterised by sharply or more subtly defined divisions based on class, educational background, ethnicity and gender. Stratification is often deeply entrenched in Third World communities depending on indigenous culture and colonial legacies (Burkey, 1993:40-41; Durning, 1989:19). Edwards and Jones (1976:222-223) noted that, unlike the conflict resolution strategies developing in the West, many developing country cultures continued to rely on the power of coercion rather than persuasion. Botchway (2001:147) and Campfens (1997:22,40-46) argue that unitary ideas about community, such as community ownership, direct attention away from the internal politics in a locality, and away from sensitive areas such as the nature of social relations and the distribution of wealth. Development implemented on the assumption that a village community has sufficient common

interest to bind all its members together is vulnerable to co-option by powerful local elites. The results of development initiatives have therefore been counterproductive, reinforcing existing power structures and increasing the disparity of wealth (Burkey, 1993:43; Mayo, 1994:63,65; Platteau and Gaspart, 2003:1687).

A major challenge for community development, therefore, is to find approaches that encourage egalitarianism and ensure that benefits are distributed equitably. In appealing to a higher motive to use power to act in the shared interests of the common good, the assets approach does not directly confront structural inequality. As an alternative, it recognises the strengths and contributions of all residents including those who might traditionally have been less valued (Kretzmann and McKnight, 1993:375). Mathie and Cunningham (2003a:479) argue that power asymmetries in communities are disrupted and diluted by an ABCD intervention, and although traditional hierarchies may re-emerge they are considered to be qualitatively different. However, these theorists (Mathie and Cunningham, 2003a:483) cite the issue of inclusive participation as an ongoing challenge for the ABCD approach, especially in developing countries where rigid social stratification may continue to marginalise some sectors such as women, lower castes, ethnic minorities and class groupings.

A further consideration is the potential of community development initiatives to disturb the economic and social status quo and thus inadvertently stimulate local conflict. Dore and Mars (1981:32) and Durning (1989:29) found that factional dissent and infighting were a common consequence of community development, making the sustainability of a rural co-operative or the management of a community asset potentially problematic. An asset-based model creates for residents an economic stake in a community and a set of internal obligations (Green and Haines, 2002:11 citing Rubin, 2000:162). This process has the potential to significantly alter existing relationships and produce transitional conflict. Mathie and Cunningham (2003a:484) argue that users of an ABCD strategy need an understanding of the historical evolution of social structures, and the potential effect of an ABCD process on community relationships and patterns of association.

Leadership

Mathie and Cunningham (2003a:483) posit community leadership as a major consideration within the ABCD approach. They argue that research is needed to learn more about the types of leadership most suited to an ABCD approach and the characteristics of community associations in terms of their ability to nurture and sustain able leaders. Further issues for ABCD are focused on change, fluidity, institutionalisation and continuity. Over time, and possibly due to the outcomes of a development initiative, the social and economic indicators of a community will alter, bringing corresponding change to the form and function of informal networks and formal associations. The membership of community associations tends to be fluid, with individuals moving in and out depending on changing personal and household circumstances. Levels of commitment and involvement on the part of members will thus vary in strength and consistency. Mathie and Cunningham (2003a:484) draw attention to the possible stultifying effects of the institutionalisation of a community association. Furthermore, with the increasing mobility that may result from improving economic conditions, residents who have been influential in an ABCD process may leave the area. These factors have implications for the effectiveness and continuity of development activities, and for the internal transfer of capacities.

Institutional Support

Mayo and Craig (1995a:1) cite institutional support for citizen participation as a central issue in the era of civil society. An enabling institutional environment is seen as one that builds local capacity and links stakeholders in horizontal rather than vertical relationships at all levels of interaction (Campfens, 1997:453; Durning, 1989:42,51; Foster and Mathie, 2001:6; Mayo and Craig, 1995a:8-9). The role of NGOs and other external actors is increasingly focused on brokering, advocacy and support (Edwards and Hulme, 1996:254-258; Mathie and Cunningham, 2003a:484). Their task is focused on strengthening the collective action that already takes place in a community, and on capacity building to ensure that local associations are defining the community vision, and mobilising local assets and resources to this end. They have a crucial role to play in encouraging local participation and developing the capabilities of citizens who have previously been excluded from decision-making (Foster and Mathie,

2001:6-7). Green and Haines (2002:228-229) highlight the delicate balance required to effect adequate institutional support for community-based organisations without undermining their authority. Echoing Chambers' (1983) original call for role reversal between developer and beneficiary, Mathie and Cunningham (2003c:7) maintain that the transformative potential of the assets-based approach can only be realised through the transformation of the external agency. Kaplan (1999:456) has accentuated how the new emphasis on civil society and empowerment presents a major challenge to the institutional orthodoxy. He maintains that a flexible approach is required, as well as an ability to plan inductively, and to work effectively with complexity and uncertainty.

While ABCD seeks to anchor control of development firmly within a locality, it is recognised that resources from outside the community will be necessary to support programmes. Cunningham et al. (2003:61-78) address the tension inherent in this position by pinpointing four crucial requirements for institutional support. Firstly, the creation of a local democratic federation is crucial to establish credibility and enable the local officeholders to generate strategic links with outsiders on behalf of the community. Secondly, the associational base should mobilise local assets in the execution of development plans before seeking external resources. This policy ensures that the community achieves an initial position of strength from which to negotiate so that development is not co-opted by the agendas of outside organisations. Thirdly, it is expected that residents will be trained and resourced to undertake the tasks required for managing local enterprises and leveraging resources independently. Fourth, while gaining access to useful resources it is predicted that residents will develop new social connections. A spin-off effect is envisioned as links between the community members, the institutional enablers and external organisations interweave and develop.

Gilchrist (2003:19) and Mayo and Craig (1995a:9) cite unresolved issues of measurement and accountability associated with community development. While recognising that many practitioners work in organisations that expect upward accountability and outcomes-based practice, Mathie and Cunningham

(2003b:8) point out that ABCD implies a shift away from the externally-controlled development project towards a practice that is flexible and inclusive of community-level interests. They advocate a new type of reporting that analyses community-driven initiatives as they unfold and which identifies how the external agency has facilitated linkages to enable the community to sustain its own development. This shift in agency practice is expected to vacate a space for stronger relationships between citizens and other actors in the development programme.

The Role of External Agents

Third World community development is characterised by a tradition of the external community organiser and a catalysing influence from outside a locality to stimulate modernisation (Bergdall, 1993:6; Durning, 1989:19-20; Gow and Vansant, 1983:428). Over the last forty years this role has become professionalised, and the community development field largely institutionalised (Campfens, 1997:226; Edwards and Jones, 1976:271-273). Theorists (Mayo and Craig, 1995a:8; Green and Haines, 2002:226-228) draw attention to the potential for partnership, and also the tensions that can arise, between community-based initiatives and local activists on the one hand and development professionals on the other. From the perspective of a range of post-development commentators (see Rahnema and Bawtree, 1997), outside agents have been discredited for their role in destabilising indigenous culture, imposing a Western value system and effectively managing and therefore stifling the political fallout of development failures. From this perspective, the assets approach can be viewed as another form of cultural imperialism that sets out to impose externally-sourced aspirations on indigenous communities.

Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) envisioned ABCD as an authentic endogenous process based on the strengths inherent in a community. Advocates argue that the approach "is not done to communities by ABCD experts" (Foster and Mathie, 2001:1; Mathie and Cunningham, 2003a:484). Bergdall (2003:2) concedes, however, that although the ideal is spontaneous internal action, some form of outside stimulus is usually required to initiate the development process. Mathie and Cunningham (2003a:483) position the role of the outsider

at arm's length, facilitating an initial process and acting as a node in a widening network of connections the community may have with other actors. They maintain that the challenge for ABCD is to avoid a level of involvement that will induce dependency. Regarding the productivity potential of social capital, Krishna (2002:163) maintains that the best results are achieved in communities where capable outside agents are available to mobilise and direct social capital toward carefully selected ends. The preferred ABCD mode of operating is to support the agency of local residents. [4]

Sustainability

Sustainability is a concept borrowed from ecology and now viewed as an essential aspect of community development (Green and Haines, 2002:183).[5] Elliott (1999b:130) posits a link between people's perceived self-interest, the achievement of secure assets, sustainability and empowerment. Durning (1989:28-29) highlights the difficulties involved, arguing that sustaining an ongoing endeavour or the long-term management of a community development initiative is a greater challenge than undertaking time-limited projects. However, the increasing recognition of the importance of endogenous development for long-term sustainability has resulted in a search for approaches that support organic development (Moemeka, 2000:8; Van der Ploeg and Long, 1994:278). ABCD can be viewed as one such approach. Green and Haines (2002:228-229) point out that although there is agreement that community development programmes are more likely to succeed if internally initiated, the local conditions within which developments are expected to succeed are often viewed as insufficient. Kretzmann and McKnight (1993:2,374) argue that development must start from within if it is to be successful and sustainable. As evidence, they cite several decades of development failures where outside plans and resources have overwhelmed local initiative. In deliberate contrast to the

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[4] In collecting examples of successful community initiatives, Mathie and Cunningham (2003c:2) noted that the common element was the catalysing role of particular local individuals - traditional leaders, leaders who emerged for a particular purpose, returnees with new ideas or locals with some education. These catalysts recognised potential for development in many forms, both inside and external to the locality, and were able to stimulate community pride and activate the local population to engage in improvement projects.

[5] For a discussion of community development and sustainability, see Green and Haines (2002:183-200).

exogenous social services model, they designed ABCD to facilitate endogenous, and therefore in their view sustainable, development through the capacity of local associations (Cunningham et al., 2003:1; Foster and Mathie, 2001:2).

Community Economic Development

Endogenous economic development is currently proposed as a major avenue for circumventing the shortcomings of state provision in a neo-liberal era and counterbalancing corporate globalisation (Platteau and Gaspart, 2003:1687; Taylor-Ide and Taylor, 2002:19).[6] Capacity building for local economic growth is therefore identified as a primary goal of community development (Gilchrist, 2003:18-19; Green and Haines, 2002:5-6,14).[7] However, localised economic development programmes based on public participation and community control are considered by many theorists (Burkey, 1993:40; Durning, 1989:22-32; Mayo, 1994:52) to be naive and problematic. Larger forces and complex technological changes are beyond the control of a local community, and have the potential to undermine grassroots economic initiatives.

Mathie and Cunningham (2003b:8) cite the conceptual base of localised economic development in the confluence of three perspectives - economic systems, individual capacity building and group capacity building.[8] ABCD, positioned as a strategy for community-driven economic development, is designed to stimulate group capacity building (Cunningham et al., 2003:19; Kretzmann and McKnight, 1993:11). The aim is to promote transformative development, drawing on a diverse range of community assets and recognising the influences of specific contextual factors. Beyond the mobilisation of a particular community, it is concerned with linking micro assets to the macro environment. Attention is thus paid to promoting a conducive policy environment and positioning the community "in relation to local institutions and the external

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[6] In the past decade a powerful model of local economic growth has emerged under the banner of embeddedness. For a critical analysis, see Taylor and Leonard (2002).

[7] For an in-depth discussion of the mechanisms and issues involved, see Green and Haines (2002:5-6).

[8] For further elaboration, see Mathie and Cunningham (2003a:8-9).

economic environment on which its continued prosperity depends" (Mathie and Cunningham, 2003b:3).

Empowerment

The concept of empowerment emerged from debates regarding the instrumental versus political meanings of participation. Critics argue that participation and empowerment are Eurocentric concepts, systematically co-opted and institutionalised by the global aid industry as a means to deliver more cost-effective aid (Cooke and Kothari, 2001:12; Rahnema, 1992:122). The development industry is also charged with an embrace of participatory development to improve its credibility, without seriously attending to the learning processes involved or to the complex political implications of empowerment (Botchway, 2001:148; Brohman, 1996:218; Mayo, 1994:65,116). The operational purposes are viewed as having diluted the liberating potential of the participatory paradigm (Dudley, 1993:7). Proponents (Cunningham, et al., 2003:23; Kretzmann and McKnight, 1993:345) note that ABCD is also susceptible to co-option by development agencies seeking blueprints to identify community assets. They claim that this will undermine the overall vision of community-driven development that ABCD has been designed to promote. The nature and purposes of empowerment are thus contested concepts, and issues of power and control at the heart of a vigorous ongoing debate (Bergdall, 1993:11-12; Holmen and Jirstrom, 1994:16; Mayo and Craig, 1995a:1-11; Michener, 1998:2105; Shuman, 1994:11-19). Oakley (1998:369) calls for a body of disciplined evidence at the community level to underpin the powerful influence of empowerment on contemporary development practice.

However, many proponents of empowerment do not seek a defined end and propose that the processes of participation and empowerment are critical as a means for people to determine their own development objectives (Overton and Storey, 2003:30). Cunningham et al. (2003:7,19) argue that empowerment approaches aim to reverse the marginalisation of the disadvantaged and challenge the underlying political structures that maintain inequality. Friedmann (1992:10) suggests ways in which empowerment might be facilitated through the work of NGOs and community-based associations. In an analysis of human

capabilities, Bebbington (1999:2021 drawing on Sen, 1997) argues that these should be viewed as a source of power. By enhancing people's abilities to question, challenge, propose and usher in new ways of doing things they position local people as agents of change, including the possibilities of controlling the rules of development.

ABCD is promoted as an empowerment approach because it aims to return to a community power traditionally held by external agencies. Mathie and Cunningham (2003a:482 drawing on Kaplan, 1999 and Fowler, 2000) advocate less direct involvement from outside agencies, arguing that ABCD seeks to construct a legitimate role for external agencies that facilitates genuine community control. They concede, however, the complex and contradictory nature of this enterprise. Most external agencies maintain agendas, such as inclusive participation and gender equality, that are part of a legitimising mandate. As well as being expressions of philosophical stances, these mission statements are crucial in securing donor funding. By handing control to a local community whose norms may actively work against these agendas, outsiders hand over the power to dictate the rules of engagement.

4. ABCD as a Critical Response to Needs-Based Development

Illich (1992:99) argues that, despite differing levels of intervention and changes in direction, all development practice has at its core ideas about human needs, assistance and managed change. A central tenet of the development from below approach was a redirection of emphasis from the needs of the economy to meeting the basic needs of poor people in developing countries (Campfens, 1997:439; Preston, 1996:245). Originally proposed, therefore, as part of the bottom-up solution to discredited top-down models, needs approaches have themselves been critiqued in the 1990s for inadvertently accentuating a scarcity-focused perspective.

ABCD is thus built on a critique of needs-based development (Kretzmann and McKnight, 1993:1-2; Mathie and Cunningham, 2003b:2; Ngunjiri, 1998:469-470). The focus on needs and problems is thought to lead community members to internalise a view of themselves as incapable and their community as

deficient, and thus lose sight of existing strengths. External experts come to view communities as lacking, and therefore in need of, skills and resources that only they can provide (Kretzmann and McKnight, 1993:4-5). Residents are cast in the role of consumers of social services, with their well-being dependent upon client status in external assistance programmes. There are few incentives for them to act as citizens, producers, entrepreneurs or community activists. Another consequence of dependency on outside agents is that community members relate less to local groups, looking outwards rather than inwards for development solutions. This is thought to weaken internal relationships that traditionally link neighbours for mutual support networks. The reliance on needs analysis as the exclusive guide to resource gathering is thus viewed as inevitably deepening dependency. Funding under the needs approach is often made available on the basis of scarcity and intractable problems, rather than for integrated programmes. It is seen as resulting in a fragmentation of efforts to provide solutions, and ignorance of local wisdom, which recognises problems as intertwined, and as symptoms of the breakdown of a community's problem-solving capacity. Kretzmann and McKnight (1993:5) maintain that sole reliance on needs-based policies cannot bring about transformative change and empowerment. What is required, they argue, is an holistic, locally-driven process that of necessity must involve the energies of an entire community.

5. ABCD as an Assertion of Capacities-Focused Development

Capacity building emerged within the alternative development paradigm as one solution to the failures of top-down development, and has become equated over time with the concept of development itself (Storey et al., 2003:526-527). It was built on the assumption that developing countries lacked, and therefore needed to develop, the human and institutional capacities found in the West (James, 1998:3). The seeds of capacity building are detectable in the self-help movement of the 1970s,[9] in that self-reliance implies making more effective use of a society's natural resources and human strengths (Brohman, 1996:219; Burkey, 1993:50-60; Oakley, 1991:118-119). Community participation is expected to increase local people's influence, promote self-confidence and

[9] For a description of the rise of Third World self-help movements, see Durning (1989:16).

develop operational expertise. Sen (1999:11) argues that development should be an integrative process aimed at enhancing the freedom of people to be active agents of change rather than passive recipients of dispensed benefits. A prerequisite is the generation of human capability through an adequate level of investment in education, healthcare and protective security, as well as the more conventionally accepted investment in economic development.

Although characterised by significant theoretical and practical tensions, capacity building is an institutionalised element of current development practice (Kaplan, 2000:517). The assets approach is a response to one such tension, the apparent contradiction between capacity building and a deficiency development model based on needs. Located within the context of the low-income urban renewal movement, the approach is based on Kretzmann and McKnight's (1993) research into the characteristics of successful community initiatives in American society (ABCD Institute, 2004). The authors were influenced by the emergence of aspirations towards neighbourhood values and by their experiences as community organisers in Chicago during the 1960s, when the civil rights movement was at its peak (Cunningham et al., 2003:14). A social justice agenda is to the fore in their work, as well as a strong commitment to egalitarian values and a belief in the inherent value of community level mobilisation.

Citing the analogy of the half-empty or half-full glass, Kretzmann and McKnight (1993:5-6,13) maintain that strong communities are built by valuing and utilising local assets. They cite historic evidence to support their argument that communities are never built "from the top-down, or from the outside-in". Although external resources are valued, significant sustainable outcomes are viewed as likely to eventuate when local residents become committed to investing themselves and their resources in development efforts. The authors argue that the key to neighbourhood regeneration in American cities, and by implication international community development, is to assemble all available local assets and capacities and combine them into new structures of opportunity and sources of income (Mathie and Cunningham, 2003a:476). ABCD thus sets out to shift community self-understanding from that of passively receiving

services as clients, to actively managing their own development through local economic development (Bergdall, 2003:2; Mathie and Cunningham, 2003a:474).

The current ABCD literature highlights conceptual consistency as an emerging issue. Mathie and Cunningham (2003b:11) credit participatory practices that have materialised in the alternative development era with contributing a rich set of tools such as Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) and gender analysis. They point out, however, that the needs-based origin of these techniques makes their utilisation problematic within a capacities approach. Bergdall (2003:11) argues that blended approaches are a result of cut-and-paste efforts to marry together activities from both approaches, often for the convenience of the community development practitioner. He argues that the result is a mixed message, a theoretical collision that leads to confusion and thus a weakening of the momentum facilitated by the capacities focus of the ABCD approach.

In recognising that the assets in communities are more likely to inspire progressive action than an exclusive focus on problems, the ABCD model draws on the theoretical insights of an approach known as Appreciative Inquiry (Cunningham et al., 2003:1).[10] Appreciative Inquiry, based on the power of belief (Foster, 2001:2), conceptualises human systems as growing in the direction of their dominant inquiry. In emphasising strengths, a community is, therefore, considered more likely to move in the direction of those strengths and orientate towards a successful future (Foster and Mathie, 2001:5l). Appreciative Inquiry is also designed to identify the "energy for change" in human systems (Elliot, 1999a:43). Cooperrider and Whitney (1999:2) propose that this can be located in the peak experiences and past successes of an organisation. Advocates use story-telling and interviewing techniques to assist an association of people to achieve a positive psychological orientation towards future developments. A collective analysis is undertaken as well to identify the

[10] For the origins and an overview of Appreciative Inquiry, see Cooperrider and Whitney (1999), Elliott (1999a) and Hammond (1998).

elements that have contributed to previous successes, and thus focus participants' attention on their inherent possibilities (Elliott, 1999a:12).

Mathie and Cunningham (2003b:4-6) cite the origins of Appreciative Inquiry in theories of knowledge construction, human communication and the social psychology of mobilisation. It is based on the assumptions that reality is socially constructed, that language is a vehicle for reinforcing shared meanings attributed to that reality, and that personal and collective motivation for change is shaped by others' views and expectations. This base, they propose, acts also as a theoretical anchor for ABCD, as well as contributing practical tools. They argue that although these concepts are flawed from the perspective of conventional inquiry because they lack the rigour of objective empiricism, they are effective in constructing shared meanings and a communal vision from everyday reality. Under an ABCD methodology, the vision is then translated into a community action plan that initiates the development process.

In utilising the anti-deficit concepts of Appreciative Inquiry, ABCD takes an oppositional stance towards the conventions of orthodox needs-based development. It is easily dismissed as naive, unworkable and unsympathetic to the real difficulties facing many communities. Proponents (Kretzmann and McKnight, 1993; Mathie and Cunningham, 2003b:6) are careful to point out that the approach does not ignore needs and there is acknowledgement of the urgency of entrenched poverty in many communities. They argue however that the deficit focus is unproductive and likely to stifle initiatives in poor localities in the developing world, and recovery in economically depressed communities in the developed world. In theorising the rejection of a problem focus, Mathie and Cunningham (2003b:6 citing Ashford and Patkar, 2001:86) note that the approach draws on the work of psychoanalyst Carl Jung. Jung proposed that many problems, logically insoluble in their own terms, could be outgrown. The emphasis on strengths is viewed as one way that communities can redefine solutions as products of collaborative action, and refocus on the potential of existing capacity. However, practitioners who are developing ABCD for application in international development (Foster and Mathie, 2001:6; Mathie and Cunningham, 2003a:479), do not underestimate the challenge involved in

achieving the goals of the approach. They note that entrenched power differentials, intrusive ideology and varying levels of commitment to the process may frustrate effective communication in a community.

6. ABCD as an Application of Assets-Based Approaches

As discussed, ABCD is located within the context of a shift in international development practice to capacity-based approaches. Mathie and Cunningham (2003a:477) thus accentuate the important contribution made by asset-building theories, particularly insights and models offered by the sustainable livelihoods literature. Emerging initially from Chambers' (1983,1986) efforts to relocate the nexus of development in the concerns of local people, sustainable livelihoods has evolved into an integrative approach that has gained considerable recognition within the aid industry in the last decade (Cahn, 2003:1). Cunningham et al. (2003:16) credit the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF), as developed by the British Department for International Development, with contributing a thorough treatment and working analysis of the nature of assets that has added conceptual strength to ABCD. ABCD is credited a complementary position in terms of its potential effectiveness in operationalising the people-centredness of the SLF. As an analytical tool, the SLF highlights the array of assets that people draw upon to create a livelihood and sets these in the context of the wider political, economic and institutional environment. As an instrument for policy and programme design, the framework emphasises an holistic understanding of development and a supportive institutional environment so that an adequate asset mix can be constructed and sustained.

The sustainable livelihoods literature has given impetus to a widening field of assets theorising. Drawing on Sen's (1997) notion of the empowering nature of human and cultural capital, Bebbington (1999:2034) argues that assets do not simply exist as resources to be used in building livelihoods. They are also a source of sustenance and power. He highlights the psychological value of assets in that they give people the capacity "to be, to act and to change", thus adding essential meaning to human lives. As such, assets become a potential basis from which people are able to challenge the structures that disadvantage them. Foster and Mathie (2001:3 citing Ritchey-Vance, 2001) note that a lack of

assets has serious repercussions. It may deprive people of a livelihood, or it may mean distance from decision-making and a sense of being devalued that may manifest in apathy, anger and a weakening of the civic culture. Mathie and Cunningham (2003c:4), arguing that access to assets is a crucial prerequisite for their activation, accentuate the importance of social capital in providing access to assets. This concept is elaborated in the next section (page 30).

Definitions and classifications of assets are evolving in the ABCD literature. Kretzmann and McKnight (1993:6-7,25) define assets as the gifts, skills and capabilities of all of the individuals, households, associations and institutions in a community. It is an inclusive definition intended to highlight previously unrecognised and untapped capacities, and the contribution of traditionally marginalised residents. Foster and Mathie (2001:2) categorise five types of community assets - individual, local associations, local institutions, physical assets and the local economy. Mathie and Cunningham (2003c:3) add natural and cultural assets. Green and Haines (2002:8-10) draw attention to the importance of the individual and collective capital-building focus inherent in the assets approach. Using the terms assets and capital interchangeably, they provide a wide definition of community development as "a planned effort to build assets that increase the capacity of residents to improve their quality of life". Regardless of differing definitions, however, the focus on assets rather than on needs represents a major shift in how community development practitioners approach their work. Instead of traditional needs analysis and problem identification exercises, there are appreciative story-telling and asset-mapping activities.

Mathie and Cunningham (2003c:3) maintain that ABCD takes the existing assets in a community as its starting point. Thus the approach builds on the theoretical insights regarding assets, drawing particular attention to the importance of assets within social relationships. Formal and informal associational life is redefined as a potential asset and relocated at the centre of development. Community members are positioned as the principal agents of development, acting through community-based organisations to develop capacities and collaborate with a range of other stakeholders such as local

government, NGOs and the private sector. In identifying assets (what is there) rather than deficits (what is not there), residents and outsiders are considered less likely to overlook the existing resources in the locale, and more likely to utilise them in development plans. Importance is thus placed on promoting opportunities for utilising internal resources and eliminating the structures that limit opportunities. The emphasis on assets is also expected to motivate and unify residents through the development of a positive perception of the community, and through the public affirmation of capacity.

7. ABCD as an Application of Social Capital Theory

Noting the large and growing literature that attempts both to define and operationalise the concept, Mathie and Cunningham (2003c:4) position social capital as the key to the people-centred approach. Putman (1993) used the term to refer to the intangible features of social organisation, such as human trust, reciprocity, norms and networks that he claimed can improve the efficiency of civic society by facilitating co-ordinated actions.[11] Woolcock and Narayan (2000) differentiated bonding social capital, that which is present in relationships between people with similar levels of power and ensures basic survival, and bridging social capital that enables people to link into other social ranks. Putman (2000:350-367) suggests that the full potential of social capital as a community development device, and as a social and economic equaliser, can be realised when bridging social capital links people of different affiliations. Although considered by some a neo-liberal depoliticising device,[12] conceptually elusive[13] and open to misuse,[14] social capital has become a key concept in social development theory, utilised by a growing number of practitioners to name the store of obligations and benevolence generated by social relations (Van Brabant, 1998:415).

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[11] For the origins and development of the concept of social capital, see Cohen and Prusak (2001), Gitell and Vidal (1998), Milner (2002) and Putman (2000, 2002).
[12] See Ferguson (1990) and Harriss (2002).
[13] For critical reviews, see Baron et al. (2000), Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (2001), Grootaert and van Bastelaer (2002), Krishna (2002) and Quibria (2003).
[14] Grootaert and van Bastelaer (2002:5) and Taylor and Leonard (2002:1) claim that the term is susceptible to becoming a catch-all category to cover any non-economic and non-political elements in development initiatives.

Krishna (2002:163-171) succinctly argues that social capital is significant in achieving diverse societal objectives, and is best viewed, therefore, as representing a latent and fluid asset that facilitates human interactions and information flows. He points to the crucial role of a mediating agency to activate the potential of social capital in communities. Individuals and associations can act to increase stocks of social capital to better position themselves and their localities for development opportunities. While the aggregate value of social capital to local economic development is now widely recognised, Mathie and Cunningham (2003c:4 citing Dupar and Badenoch, 2002) point to collective activity as contributing to increases in social capital. This is seen to result in the creation of co-operation and trust that boosts local social and economic activity beyond a narrowly prescribed development initiative.

ABCD is proposed as a means of putting the concept of social capital into operation (Foster and Mathie, 2001:3). Thus Cunningham et al. (2003:17) posit social relationships at the core of ABCD, claiming that these are increasingly recognised as the assets that provide access to all other assets, a reinterpretation of the maxim, "it is not what you know, but who you know". Underlining the relationship-driven base of the assets approach, Mathie and Cunningham (2003b:7) argue that given effective leadership and incentives, those who are socially connected in relationships of co-operation and trust have a greater propensity for collective action. Local associations, social networks and community leaders are called into service to provide the connections for collaborative effort. They are expected to mobilise bonding social capital and increase stocks of bridging social capital so that the community is able to access external resources and institutions independently. This diversification of social networks is viewed as stimulating economic activity, which in turn generates opportunities to increase and further diversify stocks of social capital. Thus the development process is sustained and scaled-up while continuing to recognise local associations as the driving force (Mathie and Cunningham, 2003c:2).

THE RESEARCH PROGRAMME: ABCD IN A DEVELOPING COUNTRY CONTEXT

ABCD and a variety of hybrid models are currently being implemented in Kenya, Ethiopia and the Philippines (Cunningham, 2004). In NGO-led community projects in India, Nepal and Tanzania, Appreciative Inquiry methods are presently utilised to stimulate assets-focused development (Foster and Mathie, 2001:4). Staff members of the Canadian Coady International Institute, in collaboration with international partners, are conducting research into capacities-based development approaches (see Appendix One). Despite the complexities and contradictions that arise, development practitioners continue to search for coherent approaches that promote local control and foster authentic community empowerment. ABCD, proposed as one such model, appears to offer a significant way forward in both developed and developing countries. As Foster and Mathie (2001:1) argue, one of the appealing features of the assets approach is the challenge it appears to offer to the disempowering mind-set of traditional deficiency-dependency models. In proposing principles and practices that activate the latent power of civil society, ABCD aims to reverse traditional roles, transforming clients into citizens, and external institutions into genuine enablers.

Given this optimistic outlook, and the fact that ABCD originated within the context of a highly developed nation, the research programme outlined in this thesis set out to discover how ABCD is applied in a community within a developing country. The intention was to examine the implementation process, identify outcomes, and thus learn more about the effectiveness and adaptation of the ABCD approach in this context. In the following chapter, the Filipino environment within which the case study was undertaken is described in detail, followed by an outline of the research design in Chapter Four.

CHAPTER THREE: THE CASE STUDY CONTEXT

INTRODUCTION

The case study research was conducted in the small rural community of Midkiwan, on the large southern island of Mindanao in the Republic of the Philippines. A brief overview of the historical development of the Philippines and of Mindanao is provided, with a particular emphasis on aspects that are relevant to the research focus. The case study community is introduced via a description of the city and barangay (administrative district) of which it is a part, followed by a profile of its physical, economic, political, social and cultural characteristics. The purpose of the chapter is to familiarise the reader with the case study locality and thus provide some background illumination of the context of the study.

THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES

Historical Development

The Philippines is characterised by an history unique in Southeast Asia, where it is geographically located (Figure 1, page 34). The combination of an Asian feudal and clan-based heritage and a 381-year period of occupation and colonisation under Spain (1565-1898) and the United States of America (1898-1946) is represented in a society that reflects both eastern and western influences (Corpuz, 1965:3-4,87; Farwell, 1966:1-9; Foster, 2001:3; Wurfel, 1988:1-23). Hedman and Sidel (2000:7) argue, however, that recent Filipino history is best understood within the context of the state structures imposed in the course of the American colonial era, rather than against a backdrop of indigenous culture or Hispanicised society.

Before Spanish conquest, no centralised political entity existed in the archipelago that is now the Philippines. Descendants of waves of Malay and Indo-Chinese settlers lived in independent and mutually hostile settlements in coastal, riverside and mountain regions (Arcilla, 1998:14,46; Batistiana and Murphy, 1996:4; Corpuz, 1965:21). Motivated by Spain's expanding ambitions as a merchant empire, Ferdinand Magellan arrived at the islands in 1521 while searching for a western route to the Far East. The Spanish Crown claimed the

islands to serve as a re-provisioning station for galleon trade between Asia and Mexico, as a Christian outpost in Southeast Asia and as a strategic stepping-stone from which to conquer China (Arcilla, 1998:1-10; Goodno, 1991:18-20). [15]

Figure 1: Southeast Asia showing the Location of the Philippines

Source: Heenan and Lamontagne (2001::x).

Although officially annexed by Spain in 1565, the conquest and colonisation of the Philippines Islands was a continuous and incomplete process (McKenna, 1998:2; Wernstedt and Spencer, 1967:121-128). The Spanish legacy can be detected in the establishment of a centralised administrative system, the entrenchment of Catholicism, the accumulation of land and economic resources by the Catholic Church and a rural elite, and the largely unintended beginnings

[15] The archipelago was named Las Islas de Filipinas (The Philippine Islands) after King Philip ii of Spain (Rodil, 1993:5).

of modernisation (Hedman and Sidel, 2000:6; Montiel, 1994:115; Wurful, 1988:4-5).

In 1898 the USA succeeded Spain as colonial ruler in the Philippines. USA colonial policy was increasingly driven by the need to provide support for expanding American imperialist, commercial and military ambitions in Southeast Asia (Clymer, 1986:3,192; Miller, 1982:14; Pomeroy, 1992:147). American government established a secular state, began the development of modern education, health and public works programmes in earnest, and further concentrated land ownership and political and economic power in the hands of elite families that formed the basis of a domestic oligarchy (Goodno, 1991:40-49; May, 1980:180). Silliman and Noble (1998a:13) hypothesise that American colonial rule, superimposed on three hundred years of Spanish colonialism, introduced the rhetoric and institutions of formal republican democracy into the Philippines but left intact and reinforced the social and economic inequality already prevalent.

At formal independence in 1946 a Filipino constitutional government, influenced by both a traditional patrimonial system and an American democratic ethos was installed (Clymer, 1986:196; Wurful, 1988:325). In the post-war era, the sovereignty of the new state was called into question by a neo-colonial alliance that involved aid, trade, investment and military bases (Friend, 1965:26; Hedman and Sidel, 2000:8; Pomeroy, 1992:155). Commentators Bello et al. (1982:198) and Broad (1988:63-64) maintain that the World Bank, acting in the interests of American foreign policy, utilised the former colony as a testing ground for Third World economic development models and project experiments in the development decades following World War Two. Thus recent developments in the Philippines are perhaps best viewed against a backdrop of contradictions between formal democracy and elite domination on the one hand, and between independence and unequal alliance on the other (Silliman and Noble, 1998a:13,15).

Physical, Economic, Social and Cultural Characteristics

The Philippines is a fertile country with extensive natural resources (Davis, 1987:1; Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), 2004). Arcilla (1998:11) notes considerable spatial and cultural diversity in the three principal island groups commonly identified - Luzon in the north, Visayas in the central region and Mindanao to the south. Many of the archipelago's 7,107 islands are uninhabited, with 94% of the population living on the 11 largest. The current population exceeds 86 million and is expected to rise to 150 million before stabilising (Balisacan and Hill, 2001:246; CIA, 2004). The economy constitutes a large rural population engaged in traditional agriculture, a modernising export-orientated sector based on agricultural exports (coconut, sugar, bananas, pineapple), extractive industries (copper, logs) and light manufacturing and a growing service industry (Broad, 1988:178; CIA, 2004).[16] With comparatively moderate economic growth, a debt to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) ratio of 77%, and 40% of the population living below the poverty line, poverty alleviation and greater income equity are major concerns in the Philippines (Bautista and Lamberte, 2002:29; CIA, 2004).

Land ownership, income, accumulated wealth and political power is highly concentrated in the Philippines (Hedman and Sidel, 2000:4; Silliman and Noble, 1998a:14; Wurful, 1988:61-62). A basic two-tier social system exists, although with widening access to tertiary education a small middle class has emerged, many working overseas and remitting significant financial resources to fulfil family obligations.[17] A comparatively small group of elite families continues to control a majority of the land and economic resources, and to hold powerful influence over the rural population. A large percentage of Filipinos are rural cultivators, fishermen, small merchants or semi-skilled urban labourers with an elementary education and an annual family income of no more than US$500 (CIA, 2004). Because of its long and complex colonial heritage, there is debate regarding major cultural themes and social change in the Philippines (Goodno,

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[16] The 2003 figures show significant disparities between economic sector and labour force share. GDP composition by sector = agriculture 14.5%, industry 32.3%, services 53.2%, while labour force occupation by sector = agriculture 45%, industry 15%, services 40% (CIA, 2004).
[17] For example, US $6-7 billion in 1998 (CIA, 2004).

1991:257-268).[18] Davis (1987:2) describes Filipinos as a caring, hospitable, religious people, many of whom live in large extended families in tight community networks. Steinberg (1986:32) maintains that most see themselves as embedded in a plural and interlocking web of obligations in which individual priorities are subservient to family, tribal or communal goals.[19] Goodno (1991:268) identifies a cultural vagueness that has arisen from a colonial mentality of long-suffering passivity, and a widespread Filipino preference for foreign culture. He maintains that, while contested, a central theme of the post-colonial, nation-building process that is in progress in the country, is the rediscovery and self-conscious assertion of an indigenous national identity.[20]

Civil Society, the State, Democracy and Development

The origins of Filipino citizen participation can be traced to nineteenth century independence movements, and to the emergence of mass peasant protest and NGOs in rural areas, in response to poverty and discriminatory land tenure systems (Batistiana and Murphy, 1996:4-12,50). Traditional colonial allegiances, an entrenched patron-client structure, the domination of the Catholic Church and elite control over the state, has hindered the development of autonomous civic structures and impinged on the effectiveness of Filipino democracy (Hutchcroft, 1991:415; Silliman and Noble, 1998a:14-15). The emergence of people's and Catholic organisations during the Marcos political regime, mid-1960s to the mid-1980s, expressed rising public discontent regarding deteriorating living standards, land tenure reform, wealth distribution, corruption and American imperialism, (Silliman and Noble, 1998a:16-17; Wurfel, 1988:64-67). These developments contributed towards the growth of a recognisable civil society. With theological justification provided by Vatican II,[21] many voluntary initiatives were based on an Alinsky-Friere approach to

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[18] Ethnic background sectors = Christian Malay 91.5%, Muslim Malay 4%, Chinese 1.5%, Other 3%. Religious sectors = Catholic 83%, Protestant 9%, Muslim 5%, Buddhist and Other 3% (CIA, 2004).

[19] For a comprehensive discussion of culture, society, religion and cultural minorities in the Philippines, see Goodno (1991::227-268).

[20] For a sociological treatise of the Filipino cultural renaissance over the last two decades, see Hedman and Sidel (2000:140-165).

[21] Vatican II was the second ecumenical council, convened by Pope John XXIII in 1963. It resulted in radical and far-reaching changes in liturgy and theology, and greater lay participation in the Catholic Church (see Hastings, 1991).

community organising.[22] However, as discussed earlier, Silliman and Noble (1998a:20) identify a disjunction between formal democracy, with its institutionalisation of individual participation in elections, and the socio-economic inequality represented by the monopoly of wealth and power by elite families. They argue that this disjunction allows continued political domination by a predatory elite and deprives non-elites of the opportunity to use the state to improve their living conditions. Thus despite efforts in the last thirty years, the organisations of civil society have had little effect in reducing economic disparity.

Since 1985, the state has actively sought the involvement of civil society in the development of the country (George, 1998:225; United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation, 1994:3). The number of NGOs has increased and, through them, innovative development approaches such as PRA, appropriate technology and sustainable agriculture have been introduced (Nasar, Villas and Luna, 2004:32; Batistiana and Murphy, 1996:33). Many initiatives, aimed at alleviating poverty and oppression, and facilitating economic and social development, have been undertaken at community level through the agency of national NGOs, church-based associations and Jesuit universities. However, despite these efforts poverty in the Philippines has increased in the 1990s (Batistiana and Murphy, 1996:44-45). Silliman and Noble (1998a:18-19) note that NGOs are currently characterised by attempts to redefine the traditional content of politics, and by increasing professionalisation and institutionalisation. They are also engaged in an intense public discourse concerning a legitimate role for civil society organisations in relationship to local-level development initiatives. For example, Mayo and Craig (1995a:8-9) highlight recurrent tensions between NGOs and progressive political parties that advocate the importance of challenging the wider structural causes of the community problems that NGOs seek to alleviate.

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[22] Saul Alinsky (1969, 1971) proposed the mobilisation of public action around a visible and winnable local issue through the coalescence of community associations in American neighbourhoods. Paulo Friere (1972,1973) advocated consciousness-raising through problem-solving education regarding the causes of poverty and oppression as a means of transformative social change in South America.

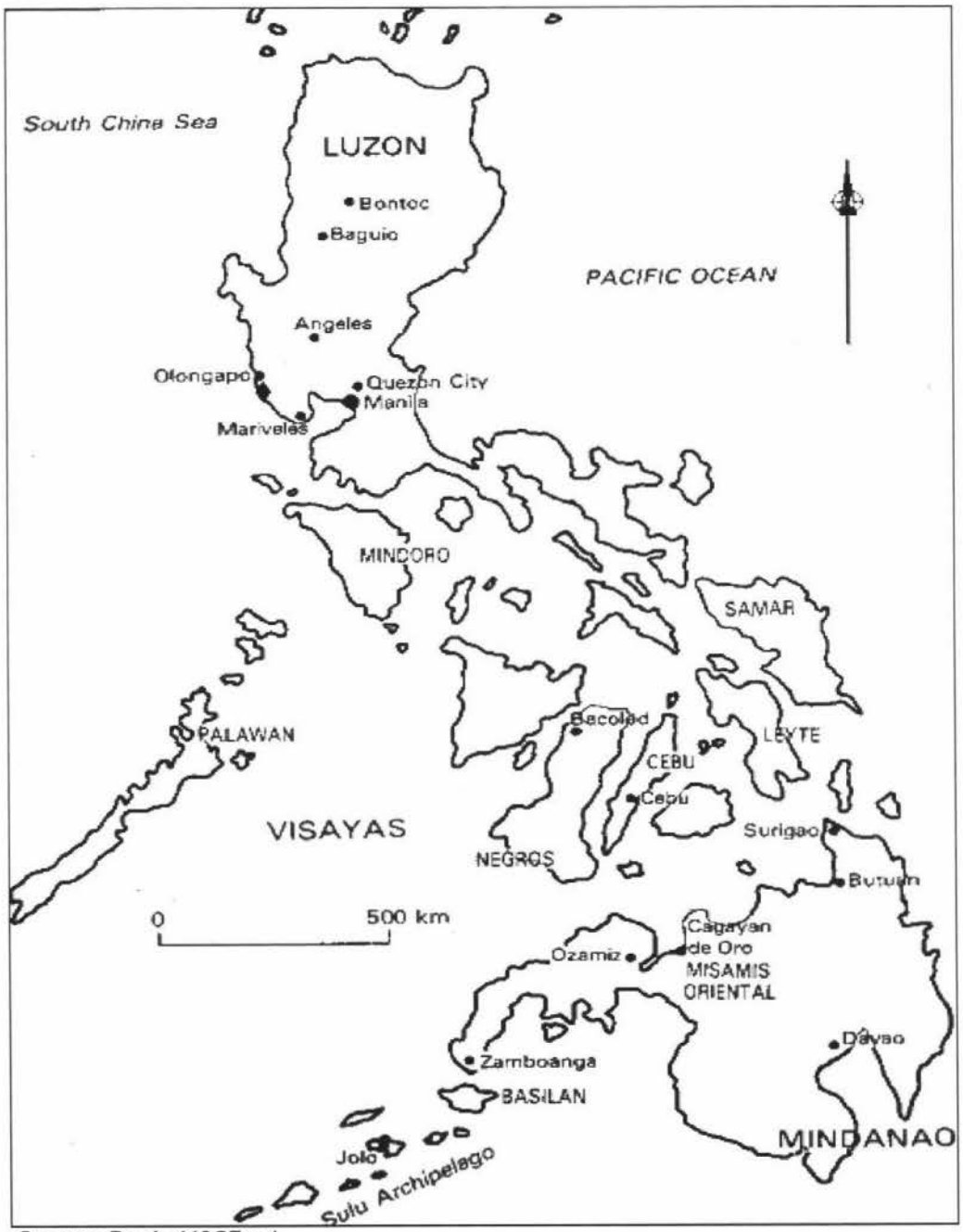
MINDANAO

In the 1960s, Corpuz (1965:8) described the topography of this 36,000 square mile southern island in the Philippines (Figure 2, page 40) thus: forest covered mountains, upland plateaux, open grasslands and plains, and great rivers and lakes. Before colonisation by Spain, there were few formal claims of land ownership and minimal co-ordinated development. The Spanish developed an agrarian structure of haciendas (large, privately owned estates) on Mindanao, more akin to that of Central and South America than to other parts of the Philippines (Goodno, 1991:22). However, Rodil (1993:11) maintains that Spain never fully subjugated the Muslim and indigenous tribal populations. Under the American administration, Mindanao developed as a two-tier settler colony (McKenna, 1998:90). The majority of residents were tenants or owner-cultivators of small properties who concentrated on self-sufficiency rather than accumulation. Except for the Northern coastal strip, the island of Mindanao constituted a frontier province under the Spanish and American administration, isolated from and never fully sharing in the cultural and economic development of the rest of the country (Wernstedt and Spencer, 1967:503-504). Abinales (2000:94) notes that, in contrast to the northern areas of the Philippines, Mindanao was not affected by Second World War-induced social disruption. Pre-war processes were left largely intact, and change and development has been at a slower pace.

Land reform and economic development are thus more recent on Mindanao, ethnic identities more discrete and civic cultures more varied. Abinales (2000:1-6,45,109) describes a current cultural mix of indigenous, Muslim and linguistically-differentiated migrant groups. She theorises that historical circumstances and the metamorphosis of the state on Mindanao has led to an emphasis rather than an attenuation of these differences, resulting in social tensions and separatist sentiments. Noble (1998:198) claims that compared to the Luzon and Visayas regions, a sense of autonomy is more highly developed in the south and is reflected in a long tradition of activism. The northern coastal area, where the case study community is situated, is the most Hispanicised region of Mindanao (Wernstedt and Spencer, 1967:506-515). Sustained contact with the Spanish colonial regime and emigration from the Visayas has led to a

more homogenous social and cultural fabric that has more in common with the Visayan Islands to the north than it does with the rest of Mindanao.

Figure 2: The Philippines showing the Location of Mindanao Island and Cagayan de Oro city



Source: Davis (1987:xx).

Government-assisted migration to Mindanao was undertaken on a large scale from 1935 onwards to provide land for impoverished tenant farmers and to ease population pressures in other parts of the islands (McKenna, 1998:115). The Mindanao Development Authority was formed in 1951 to manage migration and

foster the economic development of the island. Abinales (2000:119-123) argues that its effectiveness as a development agency was undermined by administrative ineptitude and pervasive corruption. She maintains that although Mindanao possessed untapped resources in abundance, it remained relatively undeveloped, except for the timber industry, in the 1946 to 1960 period. However, the population did grow significantly, large tracts of public land were settled and timber companies opened up roads. Long referred to as "the land of promise" (Corpuz, 1965:8), Mindanao currently has a largely agriculture-based economy producing rice, corn, coconut, sugar cane and pineapple for local consumption and export (Foster, 2001:8). The economy is growing as in the rest of the country but the majority of residents remain, by Western standards, materially poor (Bautista and Lamberte, 2002:29; CIA, 2004).

BARANGAY BAYANGA[23]

The city of Cagayan de Oro, with a population of approximately 600,000 and an annual population growth rate of 4.75%, is one of the principal commercial centres of Northern Mindanao. It is located on the northern coastline in Macabalan Bay (Figure 2, previous page; see also Appendix Two). Noble (1998:199), comparing Cagayan de Oro with other cities in Mindanao, claims that it is a more politically progressive and functional centre, with a more ethnically homogenous population and a mixed economy. The city is divided into 80 administrative and political districts, called barangays. Of these, 53 barangays are designated urban and 27 rural.

Bayanga is one such barangay, situated rurally within the inner upland area 18 kilometres south of the city (see Appendix Two). The total land area comprises 1,350.50 hectares, 58% designated disposable and 42% timberland. The 2000 census records a population of 2,089 distributed across 439 households, with projected figures estimating a population of 2,191 and 460 households by 2004. Barangay Bayanga is divided into 13 administrative localities, called sitios. The barangay is considered rich in natural resources such as minerals, forests,

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[23] Sources of information in this section: Cagayan de Oro Planning and Development Office (2003a, 2003b); Interviews with 40 ABCD participants and key informants, Cagayan de Oro and Midkiwan, June-July 2004.

rainfall and fertile soil for agricultural production. Livelihoods comprise a mixture of subsistence agriculture and income-generating activities. Of these activities, 65% of households are involved in agricultural production while the other 34% obtain income through small business ventures such as shop-keeping, firewood trading, vegetable trading, transport service provision and food vending, or through wage labour in Cagayan de Oro. Professional occupations such as teaching and nursing make up the remaining 1% of the workforce.

Communication services are unavailable to the residents of Barangay Bayanga, except via a few individually-owned cellphones. However, cellphone coverage is unreliable and non-existent in the hilly inner valleys of the barangay. Electricity is available to 90% of the residents with the other 10% using kerosene. Although individual households are not serviced by a piped water supply, potable water is plentiful via a mixture of natural springs and communal faucets. The majority of people do not own a means of mechanised transport, but residents who live near the concreted main highway that runs through the barangay, access transport services in the form of buses, jeepneys (people-carrier extended jeeps), and habelhabels (motorbikes). For those who live in the more remote areas, readily available transport is a continuing issue, with a habelhabel service often the only option. In the central area of Barangay Bayanga local government units, in partnership with the barangay council, provide a range of social services. These include a health centre staffed by a nurse, a midwife and eight voluntary health workers. Three health workers operate a health and nutrition programme from here to serve the needs of a small minority of children in the barangay who are considered malnourished. The nearest available hospital is in Cagayan de Oro city. A full elementary school (grades 1 to 6) serves the needs of children in Central Bayanga, and in the last ten years most sitios have been provided with a partial or full elementary school as well. A partial high school (forms three and four) is now established in the barangay with plans for completion by the year 2006. High school students otherwise walk or ride some distance to neighbouring Barangay Mambuaya to access a full high school education. Pre-school services are available in Central Bayanga and in some sitios. Sports facilities, such as concrete basketball courts are available, along with a barangay hall, barangay

offices and communal coconut-drying court (see Appendix Three for a map of existing facilities in Barangay Bayanga).

THE COMMUNITY OF MIDKIWAN[24]

Midkiwan is the largest of Barangay Bayanga's 13 sitios, and one of its most remote (see Appendix Four). It is situated approximately four kilometres from the centre of Barangay Bayanga in a lush green valley surrounded by hills. The community is spread along 1.5 kilometres of the road, with a natural geographic division between Lower and Upper Midkiwan that has in the past been the source of division and competition. The 560 inhabitants live in 72 households, 70 of which are family households, with an average household size of eight. Many are young families requiring basic health and educational services. A windy, ill-maintained gravel road provides access to Midkiwan from the sealed main highway. A habalhabal service is available for 50 pesos (approximately NZ$1.43)[25] return, but as this is a considerable amount for residents most regularly walk the 2.3 kilometre distance. This includes the small percentage of mostly male head-of-household commuters who travel to Cagayan de Oro on a daily basis for paid employment. From the waiting shed at the highway, frequent bus and jeepney services are available for transportation into the city and elsewhere.

Two main ethnic groups inhabit Midkiwan. The minority lumads (indigenous tribal people) have lived in the hills beyond the settlement since the Spanish occupation of the Philippines. They have gradually relinquished their traditional way of life, and more recently have left their remote ancestral lands in the mountain ranges to live on tenanted land in Midkiwan, where markets, roads

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[24] Sources of information in this section: Anhtuyet et al. (2002); Bich et al. (2002); Cagayan de Oro Planning and Development Office (2003b); Foster (2001); George et al. (2002); Interviews with 40 ABCD participants and key informants, Cagayan de Oro and Midkiwan, June-July 2004; Jude et al. (2002); Markus et al. (2001); Nacalaban (2004); SEARSOLIN (2001).

[25] The exchange rate is approximately 35 Filipino pesos = NZ$1.00

and services are accessible.[26] Land tenure is an ongoing issue for the lumads, with most wanting individual title to their tenanted farms, some of which they claim are part of ancestral homelands and theirs by inheritance. The indigenous peoples are over-represented in the poorer sections of Midkiwan society. [27] The majority of the population in Midkiwan is made up of generations of lowlanders who have migrated to the area from other parts of Mindanao. While a few own land, most, like the lumads, live and farm as tenants. As in many parts of the Philippines, the majority of landowners do not live in the district. Agrarian reform legislation aimed at reallocating the ownership of tenanted lands in the region to local farmers is semi-permanently stalled (Batistiana and Murphy, 1996:50-54), and land tenure is a continuing issue in Midkiwan.

A number of factors contribute to a relatively high degree of cultural homogeneity within Midkiwan. Most residents share in common their farming occupation, tenanted status and the local Mindanao dialect of Visayan. As well, there is a strongly-rooted sense of Filipino nationhood that Foster (2001:30) traces to the long collective struggle for independence. However, one of the strongest influences binding together the people of Midkiwan, and the Philippines itself, is the Catholic Church. In this community, 95% of residents are Catholic, with the majority professing a deep commitment to their faith. A Catholic association, Basic Ecclesiastical Communities (BEC) organises regular prayer and worship services at the chapel, with a visiting priest conducting mass on a monthly basis. The BEC group has provided the most comprehensive leadership for community improvements in the past, and it formed the nucleus from which the community development organisation, Midkiwan Community Development Association (MICODA), was formed in

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[26] Pre-Spanish Philippines comprised a collection of independent communities, an ethnic mixture of Malay and Mongoloid. Some ethno-linguistic groups began to be treated as minorities upon the arrival of the Spanish colonisers in 1565. Tribes who were assimilated into mainstream colonial society became today's lowlanders or majority, while those who resisted withdrew to the mountains. These upland groups are now known as the lumads (indigenous peoples of the Philippines or tribal Filipinos), maintaining their own cultural characteristics distinct from the dominant Christian and Muslim cultures. The Mindanao lumads is the generic term for all the indigenous tribes of Mindanao. Among then are the Manobo, Bagobo, Subanen, Matigsalog and Higaonon (Batistiana and Murphy, 1996:4,65-66).

[27] This reflects a trend noted by Russell (1986:45). There is more poverty and less development amongst indigenous people in comparison to lowlanders.

2002. A recent development is the establishment of a new religion, The Emmanual Mission. This organisation has established a church building and is offering free pre-school services and other tangible benefits to the community of Midkiwan. It is likely to make significant inroads into the Catholic stronghold in the community. The democratically-elected Barangay Bayanga Council (BBC) governs Midkiwan. The most politically influential people in Midkiwan are the barangay captain, the barangay councillor for Midkiwan and the Midkiwan sitio leader. However, the leadership of MICODA is taking an increasingly prominent role, especially in lobbying for community improvements.

The residents of Midkiwan live in small, open-air houses suitable for the tropical climate of the Philippines. The houses are made of wood, bamboo and iron. Most contain two to four small rooms and a covered porch, where up to 10 family members reside. Small kitchens built at the back are installed with open fires for cooking, fuelled by firewood cut from the surrounding forested hills. There is no internal plumbing system. Fresh, clean water is available at five communal faucets, three of which have been improved in the last two years by the addition of large concrete tubs for personal washing and laundry. Ease of access to the faucets depends on the proximity of one's house, and has been the cause of minor conflict in the past. Accessibility is easier in Upper Midkiwan, with the inhabitants of Lower Midkiwan experiencing longer walks to fill water containers. In the last five years, and in response to the increasing visitor numbers coming to Midkiwan, approximately 50% of householders have installed hand-flush, modern toilets in out-houses or out-tents, although septic tanks and sewerage systems do not exist. The majority of Midkiwan's households are supplied with electricity. Most have access to a radio or television set either in their own homes or that of a close neighbour. The average household income in Midkiwan is 417 pesos (approximately NZ$11.90) per month. As in the rest of Barangay Bayanga, livelihoods in Midkiwan are a mixture of subsistence agriculture and income-generating activities. Many households raise livestock for home consumption and maintain a vegetable garden, where corn, banana and coconut are staple foods.

Small-scale farming on a few hectares is by far the most widespread source of income generation, providing for 90% of households. The soil is fertile, rainfall adequate most of the year, and irrigation water available on a labour-intensive basis. A multitude of crops is grown for sale, including ampalaya (bitter gourd), banana, cassava, coconut, corn, mango, sweet potato, squash and vegetables, with corn the most widely grown. Farming is labour-intensive without the aid of mechanised technology. An informal reciprocal system exists, whereby many farmers band together in groups of five to ten for tasks such as land preparation, planting and harvesting. Some farmers engage casual labour from the community for this purpose, with a few owning a caribou to assist with ploughing and harvesting. Due to the intensive interventions in Midkiwan over the last four years, described in detail in Chapter Five, sustainable farming practices have been introduced. These have resulted in small increases in farm production and household incomes, and in the establishment of livestock-raising projects. A significant number of Midkiwan's residents are now engaged in small-scale chicken, pig, and goat raising for sale and private consumption, with a reasonable degree of success. Because Midkiwan farmers cannot afford private vehicles, the transportation of agricultural produce to the marketplaces of the barangay and Cagayan de Oro has been an ongoing problem. Through the efforts of the BEC group, a jeepney service was started in the early 1990s to provide weekly access from Midkiwan to marketplace. Firewood cutting and trading provides livelihoods for 8% of Midkiwan households. Firewood is cut from the surrounding forests and sold locally and in the city. Residents, barangay officials and government department staff have raised concerns in the last few years regarding the lack of a sustainable forest management plan. Midkiwan itself is named after a type of tree that, due to intensive and unsustainable harvesting, no longer grows in the area. So far no decisive action has been taken and deforestation remains a major environmental problem in Midkiwan and across Mindanao. Two per cent of households are supported by waged labour occupations in Cagayan de Oro, including carpentry, construction, gardening and driving.

Social services are available to the residents of Midkiwan, but accessibility remains a problem. The nearest health centre is located in the centre of

Barangay Bayanga, and although malnutrition is not prevalent due to the plentiful supply of home-grown food, respiratory disorders are common. Education is valued highly by Midkiwan parents, with almost all children in the community regularly attending the elementary school. Access to high school is more problematic, with most students walking four to six kilometres to and from the two nearest high schools in Central Bayanga and a neighbouring barangay. The nearest pre-school services are in Central Bayanga. As most families do not have access to a regular transportation service, nor the funds to pay for one, the majority of under five year olds in Midkiwan do not receive a pre-school education. MICODA is currently working toward the provision of a day-care centre, where children will receive a pre-school education programme on a daily basis. Funds for the building have been secured through the efforts of MICODA officer-holders, but the completion of the centre has been stalled by an internal conflict regarding its site. The BBC is planning to hold an assembly to resolve the siting issue. As well as the school, church and Catholic chapel, the community has recently acquired a communal meeting hall through community development initiatives. As well, there are two basketball courts, one of which is cemented, two small shops and a waiting shed in both Upper and Lower Midkiwan. The community has been the focus of a number of development initiatives in the past, including farming projects implemented by the Australian Agency for International Development and a range of local government departments. The most recent initiative is the asset-based community development project led by the Xavier University College of Agriculture (XUCA) in Mindanao, and which it is the purpose of this thesis to investigate.

This chapter has presented a brief overview of the Philippines, particularly highlighting themes that are relevant to the ABCD approach. The case study community of Midkiwan has been described within its wider locality on the island of Mindanao. A picture has emerged of a materially poor and spiritually rich community situated in the rural hinterland of Cagayan de Oro city. In the following chapter, the research design and ethics are outlined, together with a reflective description of the fieldwork that was undertaken in Midkiwan.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE RESEARCH DESIGN

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to provide the reader with an understanding of the philosophy, methodology and ethics that inform the study, as well as a description of research implementation and its limitations.

THE RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY

A research philosophy is comprised of a set of ontological (the nature of reality), epistemological (the nature of acceptable knowledge), and methodological (a subfield of epistemology - the methods used to gain knowledge) beliefs that guide action (Murray and Overton, 2003:17). Babbie (2004:12) maintains that due to the influence of post-modern thought, all social research can now be said to work within relativist ontologies, constructivist epistemologies and interpretative/naturalistic methodologies. This research project, thus informed, was viewed as a learning process. Mosse (1998:5) argues that process refers to relationships and conceptual features, and the dynamic, unpredictable and idiosyncratic elements in all development research. Thus the results of this study were influenced by the various subjective realities and dynamic social interactions of the many people involved. The exchange of culturally-differentiated ideas, and at times confusion and misunderstanding, added a further dimension and rich complexity to the fieldwork. Cultural differences were worked through, with the researcher viewed at times by locals as a linear-thinking Westerner obsessed by working models, and the Filipinos held by the researcher to be sometimes overly flexible and circular in their thinking. The learning process opened out as it progressed, and it is acknowledged that throughout the investigation the researcher, the residents of the community and the other interviewees involved, interacted and shaped one another's understandings. In terms of methodology, to paraphrase Denzin and Lincoln (2003:31-33), the researcher can be viewed as a multicultural subject located in the complex history of humanity, simultaneously guiding and constraining the study.

THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The Central Question and Research Aims

The study sought to address one central question that is perhaps best understood in two parts. The first part focused on how an asset-based approach to community development works in practice in the context of a developing country. The second aspect of the question sought to identify the outcomes, both in terms of the effectiveness of the ABCD activities and in terms of results for the case study community.

A Case Study Methodology

A case study was chosen as the most suitable methodology to investigate how ABCD works in practice as an international development approach. Case studies are designed to answer "how" and "why" questions about contemporary social events over which the investigator has little or no control (Rowley, 2002:16; Yin, 1994:9). The research thus sought to intensively analyse one case. Although it was not the purpose to generalise to other cases or populations, it was expected that insights might emerge from the study that could contribute to a growing field of inquiry regarding capacities-focused development approaches.

Selection of the Case Study Community

The Philippines was chosen as a site for a case study as it is one of a handful of developing nations where ABCD is being utilised as part of ongoing efforts to improve the effectiveness of development. Initial contact was made with the Coady Institute of Xavier University in Antigonish, Nova Scotia and the Xavier University College of Agriculture (XUCA) in Cagayan de Oro, Mindanao. Staff members from these two institutions are leading the development of ABCD in the Philippines. Through the on-line networks that were established, what appeared to be a suitable Filipino research community was identified and approached, and permission received for the study. Seven weeks of fieldwork were then undertaken in Mindanao during June and July 2004. Two seminars at the XUCA were attended. The first focused on the ABCD approach and the second mounted for a micro-finance NGO that worked with the case study community and had been involved in implementing the assets model there. The

purpose was for the researcher to increase knowledge regarding ABCD. It was also intended to establish links and a working relationship with staff members of the NGO, as they had agreed to provide an introduction to the community, fieldwork assistance and translation services. Ten days were spent in the community researching developments and conducting interviews. However, as the fieldwork progressed it became apparent that a very limited application of ABCD had been undertaken in this community, and that it had been implemented within a needs-based model. Although this provided constructive insights into ABCD as well as invaluable fieldwork experience, it was decided to seek an alternative context where a fuller asset-based application had been achieved. ABCD is designed as an alternative to deficiency models, and therefore it was deemed necessary to locate a substitute community where the process did not involve a blending of the two contrasting approaches. It was hoped thereby to preserve the coherency and integrity of the research enterprise.

XUCA staff members have been experimenting with ABCD in various areas in Northern Mindanao since 2002 and a range of initiatives at various stages of implementation now exist there. The community of Midkiwan was selected as it was the first to trial the ABCD approach in collaboration with XUCA, and therefore hosts the longest running operation. It was predicted that the current three-year life span of the initiative would yield a depth of reflective comment and a range of identifiable outcomes less available in more recent applications. It was anticipated that these would enrich the study and contribute to worthwhile insights regarding the usefulness of the assets approach in the developing world. Thus ten days were spent researching and interviewing in the substitute community. While this yielded a wealth of critical information, the original visa-restricted time frame had not factored in research in two communities. The amount of time that could be devoted to a wide range of interviews and observation in the second case study was thus limited, and to some extent research breadth was sacrificed for research depth. While able to interview at length many associated with the project, the study would have benefited from contact with a larger number and variety of ABCD participants and in particular

non-participants, as well as a greater range of key informants such as teachers, priests and local government officials.

Research Methods

A Methodological Framework

The study utilised five of the seven theoretical premises that form the conceptual structure of this thesis, as a methodological framework through which to address the two items of inquiry that constitute the central question. These are ABCD as:

- an application of social capital theory
- an application of assets-based approaches
- an assertion of capacities-focused development
- a vehicle for community-driven development
- an expression of the agency of civil society

The study thus brought a focus to bear on the ways in which ABCD had applied social capital theory and assets approaches, and to what effect. ABCD offers a capacities-focused methodology to counter the unproductive effects of needs-based methods. The research therefore aimed to determine how existing community assets and capacities had been utilised and further developed, and the outcomes to date. ABCD as a critical response to needs-based development, the sixth premise in the study's conceptual framework, was therefore not directly relevant and was not utilised in the methodological framework. ABCD endeavours to promote development that is community-driven and to actualise the involvement of civil society. It was therefore important to discover how these aspects of the approach had been undertaken in the case study community, and with what results. The seventh construct of the conceptual framework of this study, ABCD as an expression of a renewed emphasis on community development, was not utilised in the methodological framework because it could not be directly investigated.

A Set of Qualitative Methods

A variety of qualitative methods were utilised to collect information from primary and secondary sources, with the resulting data converted and presented quantitatively where this has been considered to assist comprehension. The methods included observation, document analysis, and informal conversations and semi-structured interviews with key informants, ABCD participants and non-participants.

Communication with key informants regarding ABCD initiatives in the Philippines began informally by electronic mail and continued in person at the XUCA. These initial conversations, sometimes with the same personnel over a number of days, were wide-ranging and open-ended, and were aimed at identifying the means whereby ABCD had been initiated in this developing country, and the process undertaken by XUCA to implement the approach in the locality. Furthermore, the discussions sought to discover personnel networks, and background information about the implementing institutions, their operating missions and organisational links. The results of this information-gathering exercise were recorded in written form during and after interactions. As knowledge was gradually accumulated, more formal interviews were conducted at XUCA with staff members who had been involved in ABCD initiatives in the area and practitioners who were developing their abilities to implement the approach. Questions sought to ascertain where and how the approach had been initiated, the implementation process, the adaptations undertaken and the outcomes to date, as well as opinions regarding aspects of the ABCD approach itself (see Appendix Five).

Semi-structured interviews were undertaken with key informants at XUCA, with barangay officials in Central Bayanga and with community leaders in the case study community regarding the ABCD project in Midkiwan. Questions were focused on gaining knowledge and opinions regarding the community, ABCD initiation and implementation there, results, issues, the ABCD process and future directions for the community (see Appendix Six). These interviews were conducted in a flexible and open-ended way so that interviewees could freely

contribute information and opinions as they emerged. This reflective process assisted the researcher to identify the most effective questions to ask.

In an effort to gain knowledge about the case study community and its residents, the locality was visited on a daily basis with many hours spent there each day. Meals were taken with community members and social functions attended. A number of meetings associated with the residents were also attended including two BBC meetings, parents' group meetings, and a training seminar and community picnic associated with the ABCD programme. ABCD participants were asked a series of prepared questions within a semi-structured interview format. The questions were designed to ascertain opinions regarding the ABCD activities, household and community outcomes, the community association, emerging issues, suggestions and future directions (see Appendix Seven). The interview format was mixed at times with informal conversations and open-ended discussions. Thus many of the interviews ranged widely, and captured an invaluable range of views regarding individual lifestyles, options and aspirations, and the community itself, its history, characteristics, previous developments and future. The format was adjusted and developed as the interviews progressed. Again this was a learning process informed by observation of, and reflection on, the responses offered and the respondents' actions and suggestions. Unlike the interviews conducted at the XUCA where English is widely spoken, English-Visayan translation was required in the case study community. This was a challenging learning process, as the researcher and translator worked together to understand the intentions of the other, constantly seeking more effective ways to elicit insightful opinion.

The interviews, ranging in length from 30 to 60 minutes, were conducted in a range of locations, including private homes, public waiting sheds and outside the community hall during a training seminar. Despite efforts to the contrary on the part of the researcher, these locations did not always insure privacy, and at times other community or family members listened in on the interview conversation with interest and curiosity. This may have inhibited the respondent's ability to speak freely. Additionally, the overhearing of replies by subsequent interviewees may have influenced their responses in a myriad of

unknown ways. However, this situation may have also facilitated the airing of previously unregistered opinions regarding developments in the community. Four sectors, namely farmers, lumads (indigenous Filipinos), women and youth were represented amongst the participants. As many young people had moved to the city to find paid employment since the ABCD implementation, the research results are limited by the under-representation of the youth voice. As well, male interviewees were less accessible during the daytime and this brought a gender imbalance to bear on the study's outcomes. It should also be noted that most of the participating interviewees were recruited through the community development association, as they had become members of it since the ABCD initiative. Research breadth and depth would have been enhanced had there been more time to locate and interview more residents who did not participate in the ABCD activities, and who were not members of the resultant development organisation.

The interview formats were constructed over time utilising the researcher's emerging knowledge and developing insight. Appendices Five, Six and Seven record the final form of this learning process. It is important to note that although these interview schedules appear as lengthy lists, they were used to guide but not dominate interviews. In practice the questions frequently flowed into one another and were answered through an informal process of recollection and reflection. Care was taken to ask the questions with tact and sensitivity. Responses were recorded in note form and written up in full within 24 hours to ensure accuracy.

A variety of documents were accessed as part of the research process. The recent publication of a 50th Anniversary book (XUCA, 2003) provided historical information and a guide to the mission and workings of the XUCA and its range of outreach units. Information regarding Xavier University (XU), XUCA, the Southeast Asia Rural Social Leadership Institute (SEARSOLIN), the Xavier Science Foundation (XSF), Christian Children's Fund Taiwan (CCFT) and Heifer Project International (HPI) was also accessed through official websites, founding documents, the minutes of meetings, evaluation reports, powerpoint presentations, programme brochures and alumni newsletters. Teaching

manuals from Coady and SEARSOLIN provided information regarding the ABCD approach and the way in which it is taught and implemented at SEARSOLIN. A report, written by a visiting researcher and reviewing XUCA-led ABCD initiatives in the locality, was an invaluable aid to the research process. It included in-depth information regarding the ABCD implementation in the case study community and a survey of activities conducted there through the XU. The XUCA had required its students to document and evaluate community development projects in which they were involved, and these papers were also procured in the course of the research. These documents contributed detailed information concerning the case study community and the PRA and ABCD programmes implemented there. Local authority profiles and reports at both city and barangay levels were accessed for information and statistical data regarding the wider locality and the research community. A report outlining the structure and workings of the research community's development association was made available, as well as project briefs and reports written for the international agencies - CCFT and HPI - that are involved in the ABCD programme in the locality. The document analysis that was undertaken provided not only factual information concerning the community, the external agencies and the ABCD content and implementation, but also insights into the cultures of the institutions, and the nature of the working relationships which developed between the actors involved.[28]

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Following guidelines established by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee, a low-risk notification approval was obtained for this study. Consent for the research was secured from the case study community members, the implementing agency and appropriate Filipino local authorities. Individual participation was sought and accepted on an informed, voluntary and confidential basis. It was made clear to all those involved in the research that individual rights to privacy and confidentiality would be protected, and that information would be collected for the sole purpose of the writing of a Masters

[28] All documents utilised in this research project are cited in Chapter Five as part of the presentation of findings. Full details of documents are provided in the Bibliography.

level thesis in Development Studies. A summary of the findings was presented by way of a Midkiwan community meeting and a BBC meeting, with an invitation to participants to seek clarification and contribute comment.

The XUCA provided accommodation, transport, translation services and initial access to key informants and the case study community. This fact can be viewed as both a strength and a limitation. XUCA staff members are currently leading ABCD in the Philippines and their comprehensive knowledge and reflective experience have contributed significant depth to the study. At the same time the researcher's reliance on the XUCA can be seen as leading to a lack of research independence and a potential conflict of interest. Participants were recruited through the agency of XUCA and the community development association and this too can be viewed as compromising the integrity of the study. The researcher attempted to mitigate these circumstances by maintaining the stance of a participant observer, both participating in and reflecting on the research process as it unfolded.

This chapter has outlined the design of the study, its philosophy, methods, ethics and fieldwork. It is hoped that some of the strengths, limitations and idiosyncrasies of the research have been highlighted for the reader. A detailed description of the results of the research is presented in the next chapter, followed by a critical analysis of the findings in Chapter Six.

CHAPTER FIVE: ABCD IN ACTION

INTRODUCTION

The research project set out to investigate how an asset-based approach to community development has been applied in practice in the Philippines, and to ascertain outcomes. The inquiry was focused through a study of an ABCD initiative that has been in progress in the community of Midkiwan since 2002. The findings of this case study are presented here. The theory that underpins the ABCD approach was discussed in Chapter Two. In this chapter, the rationale and associated methodology used to implement the approach at various stages is described in detail via reference to a range of material that draws on the original work of Kretzmann and McKnight (1993). These include published and unpublished papers (Bergdall, 2003; Foster and Mathie, 2001; Mathie and, Cunningham, 2003a, 2003b, 2003c) and training materials that have been developed since 2001 by the staff members of the Coady Institute and SEARSOLIN (Cunningham et al., 2003; Mercado and Polestico, 2001; Polestico, 2001; Polestico, 2002). As this has been a developmental process, there is merging of much of the material. For example, the 2003 ABCD training manual (Cunningham et al., 2003) was being developed as ABCD was applied in Midkiwan in 2002, and so both informs and was informed by the project. This outline of the ABCD approach is followed by a description of the implementation process in the case study community. The outcomes, as established through the research methods, are offered in narrative and quantitative formats.

INITIATING ABCD

The Methodology

An outside agent is usually assigned a catalytic role in an ABCD process, facilitating but not directly implementing developments and acting to mobilise and develop social capital in a community. The task involves identifying influential local leaders, as well as motivated individuals and groups of concerned citizens who have shown previous development initiative. Alternatively, an organiser will invite formal leaders from a broad representation of local associational groups to become involved in the ABCD process. In smaller communities, the identification of internal catalysts may be

straightforward, whereas in larger locales or transient urban neighbourhoods it may require considerable skill and exertion. The energies of these potential community catalysts are harnessed for ABCD and efforts are made to encourage broad participation. In motivating citizens to participate, organisers have the complex task of establishing links between ABCD opportunities and personal motivations to act, and highlighting the connection between individual interest and common interest. A core group of citizens who are interested in driving the community development process is expected to emerge and, through the legitimacy of their leadership and social networks, to draw in a wider circle of community members over time.

Initiating ABCD in Mindanao[29]

University-Led Community Involvement

Xavier University (XU), a Jesuit-inspired university in Cagayan de Oro founded in 1933,[30] has acted as the external agency that has disseminated ABCD in Mindanao. As an expression of a community service mission, the university requires its colleges to integrate a curriculum-based community involvement programme into the learning modules offered to students. The university community involvement and extension service, known as Kristohanong Katilingban sa Pagpakabana (KKP, translated as Christian Community Involvement) is responsible for overseeing this process. In early 2000, and in consultation with local Catholic authorities, KKP initiated a socio-economic survey of Lumbia Parish, of which Barangay Bayanga is a part. The results of the survey apparently pinpointed a number of sitios within the parish as being relatively poor and in need of assistance.[31] Midkiwan was identified as one of these, and subsequent development attention from the university colleges was focused there during the academic years of 2000 and 2001.

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[29] Sources of information in this section: Interviews with 6 key informants, Xavier University College of Agriculture, Cagagyan de Oro, June-July 2004; Polestico (2003); SEARSOLIN (2003); Xavier University (2001, 2003); Xavier University website (2004); Xavier University College of Agriculture (2003)

[30] The university began life in 1933 as Ateneo de Cagayan (Cagayan High School). It acquired university status in 1958 and was then renamed Xavier University - Ateneo de Cagayan (Xavier University - Ateneo de Cagayan website, 2004).

[31] The researcher was unable to obtain a copy of the survey.

Leadership from the Xavier University College of Agriculture (XUCA)

The XUCA has led the university's involvement in Midkiwan. XUCA describes itself as a social and educational apostolate,[32] its mission to actively facilitate the participation, development and empowerment of poor rural communities in Mindanao through research, education and extension services. It encompasses a number of institutes and outreach units,[33] some of which were involved in activities in Midkiwan in 2000 and 2001. Of particular note is the involvement of SEARSOLIN. This institute has been conducting rural leadership courses for development agents of Asia, Africa and the Pacific since 1964. In 2001 the practicum for the first module of the course, "Participatory, Organisational and Project Management", was located in Midkiwan, where the students conducted PRA and some aspects of ABCD with the residents, and made development plans based on the results. This mixture of needs-based approaches such as PRA and the capacities base of ABCD, highlights the developmental stage of thinking that the XUCA staff members had achieved. Due to the introduction of ABCD from the Coady Institute during this time, described in the next section, there was a crossover when "the problem-tree was on its way out and the asset map was on its way in" (interview quote).

The Introduction of ABCD from the Coady Institute

The Coady International Institute is a Canadian equivalent of SEARSOLIN. John McKnight, from the ABCD Institute,[34] had visited Coady in 1999 to disseminate the assets approach, and together with John Kretzmann and Coady staff members, had begun to consider the possibilities of this approach in an international development context. The director of SEARSOLIN became aware of ABCD in 2000 through his continuing contact with Coady, a previous alma mater. He invited the Coady teaching staff to visit XUCA early in 2001 to

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[32] Apostolate - the office or authority of an apostle of Jesus Christ (Collins English Dictionary, 1991). The term is used by the Catholic Church to mean a religiously inspired mission.

[33] Each of the XUCA outreach units has been founded to focus on a particular aspect of agricultural and/or rural development (XUCA, 2003:11-22).

[34] The Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) Institute was established in 1995 by the Community Development Programme of the Institute for Policy Research at Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois. Its aim is to proliferate the findings of John Kretzmann and John McKnight's three decades of research on capacity-building community development (ABCD Institute website, 2004).

introduce ABCD to staff members. XUCA began to include some of the principles and methods of ABCD in their teaching courses during 2001, although a comprehensive application was not undertaken until 2002. In mid-2001 a Coady researcher reviewed the fledgling ABCD initiatives being undertaken through XUCA in an attempt to assess their future potential. Although this review was cut short by the September 11 terrorist events in America, a draft report was completed (Foster, 2001). XUCA staff members utilised many of its recommendations in the design of the ABCD programme that was implemented in Midkiwan the following year.

SEARSOLIN - Coady Collaboration on ABCD

In early 2003, and as a result of the liaison already established between the two institutes, a staff member from SEARSOLIN travelled to the Coady Institute in Nova Scotia. She and two Coady staff members developed a new community development certificate course for students, "Community-Driven Development: The Asset-Based Approach", along with an accompanying manual (Cunningham et al., 2003). Conventional needs-based methodologies were critiqued and ABCD was presented as "a promising alternative" for stimulating community-driven development. The authors, maintaining that ABCD could be combined with other participatory methods such as PRA by applying them in a more positive and community-driven way, configured ABCD as a 6-step process (Figure 3, following page).

THE ABCD APPROACH AND ITS INTRODUCTION TO MIDKIWAN[35]

A University Review of Developments in Midkiwan

During the latter part of 2001 community members and XUCA staff raised concerns regarding the confusion and frustration being experienced in Midkiwan caused by the large number of unco-ordinated university activities in the area, and by the duplication of information being generated. As well, Foster (2001:16) drew attention to the "fine line being walked" by XU between helping the community, and exploiting it for the academic needs of its students.

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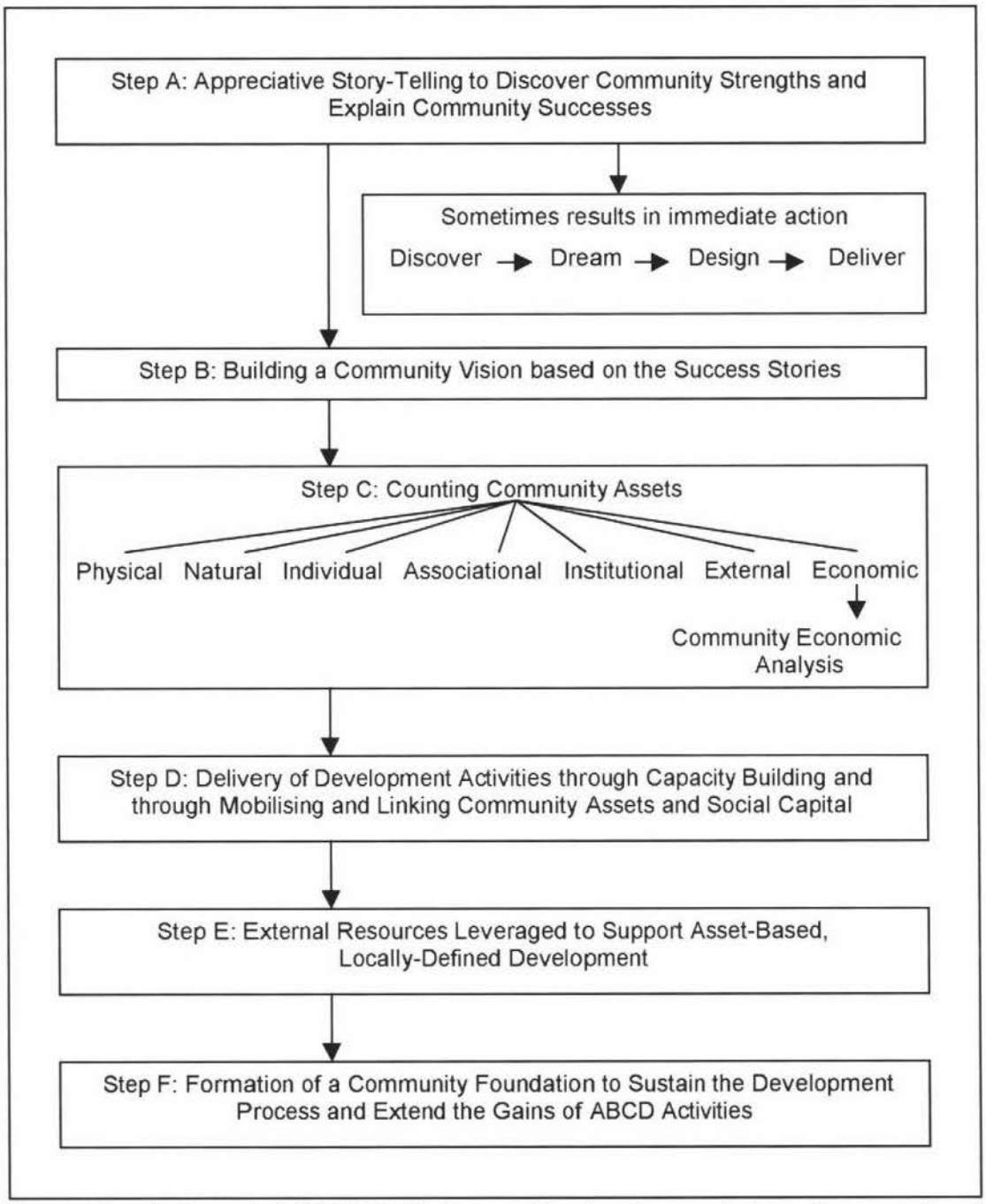
[35] Sources of information in this section: Cunningham et al. (2003); Interviews with 6 key informants, Xavier University College of Agriculture, Cagagyan de Oro, June-July 2004; Foster (2001); Polestico (2004); Xavier university (2001).

Figure 3: The Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) Model



Source: Cunningham et al. (2003:24-25). Some editing has been undertaken for ease of reader access.

In September and October of 2001, therefore, the XUCA conducted a series of internal planning meetings. Previous initiatives in Midkiwan were completed, and a new direction set whereby ABCD would be used as a unified approach for development in the community. An ABCD co-ordinating committee was established through which all future university activities would be channelled,

and an ABCD co-ordinator appointed to oversee the process in Midkiwan and in neighbouring communities with which the XUCA intended to work.

ABCD Adopted as the Central Community Development Approach

Thus by June 2002, and in contrast with previous needs-based approaches, the SEARSOLIN rural leadership course had adopted ABCD as its central development approach, with PRA activities to be used as a tool for gathering information about the assets of the community. The international students in attendance were taught the basics of the assets approach, the techniques of PRA, and provided with an introductory profile of the Midkiwan community. A practicum followed whereby the students spent seven days in this community applying what they had learnt. To better comply with the group-work ethos of the SEARSOLIN training course and to ensure sector representation, the community members who attended were divided into groups. Students thus facilitated the first four steps of the ABCD model - appreciative story-telling, community vision-building, community asset-counting and development planning - in four sector groups in the following numbers - 12 farmers, 11 lumads, 14 women, 6 youth (approximately 16 to 25 year olds). Except for the women's group, these sector clusters were made up of both genders with female outweighing male representation in all cases. The result was the creation of four visions and four sets of plans, which the four groups have since undertaken to implement under the co-ordinating umbrella of the Midkiwan Community Development Association (MICODA). A clear line had been drawn between the former needs-based approach and the new capacities focus in the minds of XUCA staff. This is a crucial distinction in terms of the assets-based philosophy. Although informed of the change of direction, a proportion of community members who were interviewed did not appear to comprehend its significance. For them, the 2002 ABCD practicum in Midkiwan followed on naturally from the previous year's PRA activities. However, a number of MICODA office-holders did appear to understand the significance of the difference between these two community development approaches.

THE RESEARCH PROGRAMME AND FINDINGS

Research Respondents

The research programme obtained the opinions of 40 respondents regarding the implementation and outcomes of the various steps of the ABCD model in Midkiwan. Of these, 31 interviewees - 25 women and 6 men - were community members who were involved in the ABCD activities. These participants were drawn from the four sectors that had been organised by SEARSOLIN in the following numbers - 7 farmers, 10 lumads, 12 women, 2 youth. As well, the views of 9 key informants (KIs) were recorded. Five of these - 2 men and 3 women - were residents who had not participated in the ABCD programme but who were closely involved as spouses or neighbours of participants. The remaining 4 key informants were XUCA personnel who had facilitated or observed the ABCD activities in the community. Table 1 thus presents a statistical overview of the 36 residents of Midkiwan who were interviewed.

Table 1: Statistical Overview of Midkiwan Respondents

Gender		Age				Marital Status		
Female	Male	21-30 yrs	31-40 yrs	41-50 yrs	51-60 yrs	Single	Married	Widowed
28	8	4	15	11	6	1	34	1

Given Occupation								
Community Organiser	Child-carer	Dressmaker/ Farmer	Farmer	Farmer/ Trader	Farmer/ Housewife	Firewood Gatherer	Housewife/ Childcarer	Trader
1	1	1	13	3	5	1	10	1

Number of children										
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2	1	5	4	6	5	8	3	0	1	1

Years Lived in Midkiwan							
Whole Life	0-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	16-20 years	21-25 years	26-30 years	31+ years
9	5	3	5	2	3	4	5

Source: Interviews with 36 Midkiwan ABCD participants and key informants, 1-15 July 2004.

During research into the overall outcomes of the ABCD initiative in Midkiwan, a wider range of opinion was surveyed. It should be noted, therefore, that the tables recording the results of these interviews, presented towards the conclusion of the chapter, include the input of 8 additional key informants, making a total of 48 respondents for this section.

The Sequencing of the ABCD Steps

By the time the ABCD process was launched in Midkiwan in June 2002, and as a result of the PRA activities in 2001, significant external resources had been leveraged and a community association founded. These last two steps in the ABCD model were thus achieved first, and via a needs-based approach. Although this has "muddied the waters" somewhat, the following section utilises the model presented in Figure 3 (page 61) as a structure through which to outline the ABCD process and its application in the case study community.

Step A: Appreciative Story-Telling

Based on the conceptual insights of Appreciative Inquiry, this first step in an ABCD process is focused on the analysis of past community achievements.

Appreciative Story-Telling: The Objectives

By placing a high value on the community and the culture in which it is embedded, the appreciative story-telling activity seeks to create an orientation towards a successful future at the outset of the community development initiative. This is expected to lead to a productive development process. The generation and sharing of successful stories from diverse sectors is expected to reveal common aspirations in a community, thus developing unity and a co-operative attitude. The exercise also aims to develop pride and confidence in community members as a means of motivating pro-active development activity and countering dependency. The intention is to develop a mutuality of genuine learning and appreciation amongst the facilitators and community members. Because residents are usually well disposed toward sharing stories of local successes with outsiders, the appreciative story-telling exercise is also proposed as an effective method for the external agent to integrate into a community. Furthermore, the activity aims to identify enabling factors by conducting an analysis of the success stories and the means whereby challenges have been addressed in the past. The results are expected to serve as a model of community best practice, to be consulted in designing new initiatives and addressing specific issues that may arise. The exercise is also designed to produce adequate documentation of a community's strengths and thus a basis for the subsequent steps in the ABCD process.

Appreciative Story-Telling: The Methodology

A community organiser is expected to spend considerable time in a locality interviewing individuals and groups regarding the way that the community has successfully mobilised in the past. A collection of success stories from a broad representation of community sectors is emphasised. Interview questions must be specific and the discussion focused, so that detailed information about individual and community strengths and assets is produced. Interviewers are expected to ask probing questions so that enabling factors are revealed, analysed and utilised. ABCD designers suggest that the interviews begin informally with individuals to build rapport, and over time become more systematic and group-focused. An alternative approach is to organise a meeting where community members work in facilitated groups and report a summary to a plenary session. A co-ordinator synthesises the success stories and analyses the enabling factors. The designers acknowledge that individuals may be unwilling to reveal positive personal attributes that contributed toward community successes, and recommend that in these cases such information is sought from other sources. It is suggested that the success stories are collected, written up and displayed prominently in the community to serve as a source of transparent information and inspiration.

Appreciative Story-Telling: Implementation in Midkiwan

Appreciative story-telling, the third activity in the ABCD process to be implemented in Midkiwan, was completed in one day, 17 June 2002. SEARSOLIN students facilitated four sector groups in the following numbers - 12 farmers, 11 lumads 14 women, 6 youth. The aim was to provide the students with an opportunity to practise appreciative inquiry and residents with facilitators who were trained in applying this step of the ABCD process. During the activity, community members were able to hear and discuss the success stories contributed by the other participants in their group. A plenary forum to facilitate the sharing of summaries across the four groups was not included. It is probable, however, that residents engaged in ongoing, informal sharing of workshop content. Tables 2, 3, 4 and 5 (following), replicated from those recorded by the SEARSOLIN students, display the success stories and corresponding enabling factors. Some minor editing of the original tables has

been undertaken for ease of access and to correct English grammar, with care taken to retain the original meanings. It is noted that there was some misunderstanding regarding the identification of enabling factors and a small number were recorded as outcomes or as problems, while some tables were not completed.

Table 2: The Results of Appreciative Story-Telling with the Farmers

Successful Projects	Enabling Factors
• Basic Ecclesiastic Communities (BEC) in Midkiwan since 1978 • building of a small chapel	• brought about greater unity • strengthened faith in God • regular bible-sharing sessions
• water reservoir built in 1982 • availability of clean potable water	• local government department
• availability of electric light by 1980	• electric company
• completion of a full Grade 1 to 6 elementary school	• Department of Education (DE)
• a teacher from the elementary school volunteered his time to teach the 3 Rs to adults with little formal schooling with 1 adult graduating in 2001	• encouragement of education
• training in better farming techniques 2001	• XUCA Sustainable Agriculture Centre (SAC)
• training in project implementation and organisational skills	• XUCA • SEARSOLIN
• "pass on the gift" cow dispersal -1994 • increased membership of CART	• XUCA Centre for Appropriate Rural Technology (CART)
• "pass on the gift" chicken dispersal - 2002 • training in chicken-raising	• Heifer Project International (HPI) • XUCA SAC

Source: Anhtuyet et al. (2002:4-5).

Table 3: The Results of Appreciative Story-Telling with the Lumads

Successful Activities	Enabling Factors
• utilisation of ancestral land using simple traditional farm tools	• strong determination to work ancestral land • strong convictions about the value of traditional Higaonon (indigenous tribe) culture • slash-and-burn system as the only method of farming due to a lack of capital
• ability to send children to school even though only up to elementary level	• diligence in order to send children to school • perseverance and hard work on the farm to finance family needs
• successful negotiation with DE and Barangay Development Council (BDC) for the school buildings	• strong will • firm aspirations to have a school for Grades 1 to 6 children in Midkiwan
• ability to support the needs of youth through a benefit dance	
• one lumad became a sitio leader and began disseminating information from the barangay level to the community level	• increased access for Midkiwan

Source: Jude et al. (2002:2).

Table 4: The Results of Appreciative Story-Telling with the Women

Success Stories	Enabling Factors
• helping husbands on the farm	• harmonious family relationships • supportive husbands • livelihood training • faith in God • materially poor but proud to say that God is always with us and hears our prayers for ourselves and our families • ability to have a vision for the future • motivation to develop politically, socially, spiritually and economically
• helping husbands to augment family income by selling vegetables, raising backyard livestock, cutting firewood and store-keeping. Even with this there is often not enough income to satisfy family needs	
• being mothers and taking care of our children	
• unending success stories • every day we look to the future and encounter new ideas and inspirations	

Source: Bich et al. (2002:2-3).

Table 5: The Results of Appreciative Story-Telling with the Youth

Achievements	Enabling Factors
• involvement in sports activities • the sports committee • the women's volleyball team placed second	• support from the parents • permission from the barangay council • co-ordination between youth and community leaders
• involvement in church activities • the leadership of the choir • the weekly BEC prayer sessions	
• involvement in celebrations • the mobilisation for the benefit dance • the games during celebrations	

Source: George et al. (2002:2).

Appreciative Story-Telling: An Assessment

Having ascertained how appreciative story-telling had been implemented and recorded in Midkiwan, the research programme then surveyed the 40 respondents - 31 ABCD participants and 9 key informants - regarding its effectiveness (see Appendix Seven). The results are summarised in Table 6.

Table 6: Assessment of Appreciative Story-Telling (AST) in Midkiwan

Assessment of AST	Number of Respondents in Each Category						KIs	Total	Total as %
	Farmers	Lumads	Women	Youth	Female	Male			
AST Unhelpful	2				1	1		**2**	5%
AST Helpful	5	8	10	2	21	4	9	**34**	85%
Mixed		1	1		1	1		**2**	5%
No Opinion		1			1			**1**	2.5%
No Recall			1		1			**1**	2.5%
Totals	7	10	12	2	25	6	9	**40**	100%

Source: Interviews with 40 Respondents, Cagayan de Oro and Midkiwan, June-July 2004.

As recorded, two respondents (5%) answered in the negative, one (male) was of the opinion that the residents' problems should have been discussed first so

that they could be properly acknowledged and understood by outsiders. The other (female) reasoned that it was too easy to focus on successes, as that resulted in a glossing over of what is a significant conflict in the community. Of the respondents who contributed a mixed response, one (female) indicated that while appreciative story-telling was helpful in terms of motivating the community, it was important to discuss the development issues early on as well so as to come to a full understanding of them. The other (male) respondent maintained that the exercise had encouraged him to get involved in community development, but he had felt disappointed that there had been little opportunity to discuss the needs of the community. Three respondents, while affirming the value of the appreciative story-telling activity, highlighted the personally challenging nature of the exercise for many community members. A number of participants had shared with them their feelings of fear, shyness and embarrassment, particularly at the beginning of the proceedings.

Table 7: Respondents' Reasons for Affirming Appreciative Story-Telling (AST)

Reasons for Affirming AST	Number of Respondents who Identified Reason						KIs	Total	Total as %
	Farmers	Lumads	Women	Youth	*Female*	*Male*			
Orientation towards a successful future	2	3	4	2	*9*	*2*	8	**19**	**26.1%**
Development of unity/co-operation	2	4	6	1	*12*	*1*	7	**20**	**27.4%**
Motivation to develop community	1	3	3	1	*7*	*1*	7	**15**	**20.5%**
Identification of enabling factors	1		2		*2*	*1*	2	**5**	**6.8%**
Identification of "best practice"			1		*1*			**1**	**1.4%**
Create learning/ appreciation culture	1		1		*2*		4	**6**	**8.2%**
Data collection for ABCD process			1		*1*		3	**4**	**5.5%**
Effective integration method							1	**1**	**1.4%**
Source of new farming ideas	1	1			*1*	*1*		**2**	**2.7%**

Source: Interviews with 40 Respondents, Cagayan de Oro and Midkiwan, June-July 2004.

The affirmative or partially-affirmative responses (90%) reflected a range of reasons for approving the exercise. These have been recorded in terms of the objectives of appreciative story-telling as an ABCD activity. One response, noted in italics in the table above, fell outside of the established categories.

Some respondents contributed more than one reason for their answer. The results are presented in Table 7 (above).

Following is a representative sample of verbatim interview responses to provide a more qualitative insight into the views of Midkiwan residents.

Source: Interviews with Residents, Midkiwan, 1-15 July 2004.

> *It focused us on the positive rather than the negative.*
>
> *It helped me to take some pride in our achievements.*
>
> *I was reminded that we had solved problems by co-operating before, so facing the next problem didn't seem like such a hurdle.*
> *Sharing successful stories created a co-operative spirit right from the start.*
>
> *It provided me with some new farming ideas that I could try out immediately.*
>
> *I realised that we could be equal counterparts with the barangay council and outside agencies.*
>
> *It created enthusiasm and confidence for improvements in the community.*
>
> *It helped me to get to know and appreciate my neighbours better.*
>
> *It helped to turn the young people away from drugs and gambling.*
>
> *It provided a great challenge because some participants felt shy and hesitant about relating their successes, but in doing so, they grew in stature.*
>
> *It strengthened some relationships in families and between husbands and wives.*
>
> *It made me realise that despite problems, we have sustained this community over many years already. I realised that we had the capacity ourselves if we were willing to be involved and to learn.*

Step B: Community Vision-Building

Based on the identification of success stories and enabling factors, the community vision-building exercise follows on logically from appreciative story-telling and has similar aims.

Community Vision-Building: The Objectives

The visioning exercise aims to motivate and inspire residents to become involved in planning and to accept responsibility for the development process and for the community's future. A commonly shared future vision is expected to build unity in a community and thus lead to a greater likelihood of completed projects and successful development. Furthermore, the vision statement acts as a basis for compiling development plans, a later step in the ABCD process.

Community Vision-Building: The Methodology

The visioning exercise is expected to flow on logically from a consideration of the community achievements that have been highlighted in the preceding appreciative inquiry activities. It can be conducted at the same community meeting or at a follow-up seminar. The community organiser or facilitator invites a broad representation of residents to contribute their ideas regarding a vision for the community's future, based on what has already been achieved. Although the discussions may focus at times on specific development plans, the community vision-building activity is envisaged in the first instance as an expression of dreams and generalised goals. During the discussions, which may take place in groups or in a plenary forum, ideas are collated and recorded. Artistic and creative expressions of community visions are encouraged as well, in the form of painting, song, poetry, role-play and dramatic enactment. The final outcome of the exercise is the formation of a community vision statement, and/or visual representation of a vision statement, around which all members of the community might unify.

Community Vision-Building: Implementation in Midkiwan

Community vision-building, the fourth ABCD activity to be implemented in Midkiwan, was undertaken on the morning of 18 June 2002, with SEARSOLIN students facilitating the same four community groups. The visions were recorded by the students and reproduced in narrative reports. A plenary session

was included so that all participants could be informed of the achievements of the other groups. It is noted that no attempt was made to integrate the four visions into one overall community vision. The outcomes of the vision-building exercise were presented in a variety of formats - pictorial representations, narratives and written lists. As with appreciative story-telling, the aim of the exercise was twofold - to provide SEARSOLIN students with an opportunity to practice facilitation and recording skills, and to provide residents with an opportunity to contribute towards vision-building for their community. The visions as they were recorded in Midkiwan are reproduced in Tables 8, 9, 10 and 11 (following).

Table 8: The Results of Community Vision-Building with the Farmers

The Farmers' Dream
• uplift the socio-economic situation of the families in Midkiwan
• build a training centre
• access training in improved farming methods
• a consumers and credit co-operative to access farm inputs and sell agricultural produce at reduced rates, and as an agency for capital saving and borrowing
• establish a corn mill
• better access to health services - build a health centre
• ensure that our children complete a high school education
• build a day-care centre for pre-school education
• complete a concrete road that provides all-weather access to the main highway
• continuation of the weekly jeepney service to provide security of access to markets for agricultural produce

Source: Anhtuyet et al. (2002:3,6).

Table 9: The Results of Community Vision-Building with the Lumads

The Lumads' Vision for the Future
• food security
• land security
• improved farming technology
• a united community
• a strengthened community

Source: Jude et al. (2002:3).

It can be seen that results represented a mix of visionary statements and what can be understood as development planning objectives. The lack of clarity may have been due to confusion about the nature of vision statements but it could also reflect inadequate facilitation skills. Subsequent ABCD initiatives in neighbouring communities have resulted in succinct, if difficult to measure, vision statements such as "Better Life in Our Community".

Table 10: The Results of Community Vision-Building with the Women

The Women's Vision for Midkiwan
• improved livelihoods
• home gardens
• backyard livestock raising
• training to improve skills and livelihoods opportunities
• pre-school education via the building of a day-care centre
• a health centre
• co-operative community development
• empowerment of women
• a faith-based united community

Source: Bich et al. (2002:4).

Table 11: The Results of Community Vision-Building with the Youth

Youth Vision for Midkiwan
• a community training centre / meeting hall
• training courses to improve skills and livelihoods
• beautification of the chapel
• beautification of the community
• a Midkiwan high school
• sports facilities development - basketball, volleyball, soccer
• youth group strengthening

Source: George et al. (2002:3-5).

Community Vision-Building: An Assessment

Having ascertained how community vision-building had been implemented in Midkiwan, the research programme surveyed the 31 participants and 9 key informants regarding its effectiveness (see Appendix Seven). All 40 respondents affirmed community vision-building, with responses reflecting a range of reasons for valuing the activity. These have been recorded in terms of the objectives of community vision-building as an ABCD activity, although many responses, noted in italics in the following table, fell outside of the established categories. Some respondents contributed more than one reason for their answer. The results are presented in Table 12 (following page).

Table 12: Respondents' Reasons for Affirming Community Vision-Building (CVB)

Reasons for Affirming CVB	Number of Respondents who Identified Reason						KIs	Total	Total as %
	Farmers	Lumads	Women	Youth	*Female*	*Male*			
Discovery of will to own development	1	2	1		*3*	*1*	5	**9**	**7.5%**
Source of inspiration for planning	1	3	5	1	*8*	*2*	3	**13**	**10.8%**
Creation of a common focus		3	4	1	*6*	*2*	6	**14**	**11.7%**
Development of a unified community		4	4	1	*8*	*1*	5	**14**	**11.7%**
Increased responsibility for the future	1	1	1		*3*		4	**7**	**5.8%**
Motivation for improvements		2	1	2	*3*	*2*	9	**14**	**11.7%**
Creation of an advocacy tool			1		*1*		2	**3**	**2.5%**
Increased confidence in the future	2		1		*2*	*1*	1	**4**	**3.3%**
Improved resident communication	1		2		*2*	*1*	1	**4**	**3.3%**
Enhanced group inclusion	1	1	2		*3*	*1*	1	**5**	**4.2%**
Diversion from destructive pursuits	1			1		*2*	1	**3**	**2.5%**
Decreased dependency on outsiders	1		1		*2*		6	**8**	**6.7%**
Decreased preoccupation with individual concerns		1	1	1	*2*	*1*	3	**6**	**5.0%**
Development of uncomplicated plan	1	1			*1*	*1*		**2**	**1.7%**
Development of a definite plan	1	3	5		*8*	*1*	1	**10**	**8.3%**
Dreaming as a first step to development		1	1		*1*	*1*	1	**3**	**2.5%**
Projection into the future	1				*1*			**1**	**0.8%**

Source: Interviews with 40 Respondents, Cagayan de Oro and Midkiwan, June-July 2004.

A representative sample of verbatim responses from interview transcripts is offered below.

Source: Interviews with Residents, Midkiwan, 1-15 July 2004.

> *The vision provided inspiration for improvement.*
>
> *We ended up with a concrete plan that we could stick to - no changing our minds, which has sometimes happened in the past.*
>
> *It created a united will and a common way forward that all agreed to.*
>
> *We were motivated to do more ourselves.*
>
> *We were guided to develop a wider community perspective.*

The vision helped us to project ourselves into the future and to resolve problems.

Some residents were encouraged to join MICODA.

Step C: Community Asset-Counting

Encompassing a broad definition of assets, this process aims to identify and map the economic, human, natural, physical and social assets in the community.

Community Asset-Counting: The Objectives

Through identifying the community's resources, a perception of the community as a place of competence and abundance is sought. This perception is expected to give impetus to development efforts and counter feelings of resignation. The public profiling of residents' capabilities aims to increase individual motivation and strengthen internal relationships, conditions that are thought to lead to more successful and sustained development. Furthermore, community asset-counting sets out to minimise dependency on outside resources by highlighting all existing tangible and intangible assets, and by creating linkages between those resources for development planning. The use and development of social assets is given special emphasis. The results are utilised in the planning stage of the ABCD process.

Community Asset-Counting: The Methodology

The documentation of assets can be undertaken by conducting facilitated community meetings, by co-ordinating a core group of committed local citizens who have emerged in the preceding activities, or by other methods suggested by a community's residents. An inventory of assets is built up under a range of categories, including individual capabilities (practical, civic, entrepreneurial, cultural, artistic), social networks, natural resources, physical infrastructure, economic flows, community associations, local institutions and external organisations. A range of methods is utilised to ascertain and document assets and the relationships between assets. These include individual profiles, community member inventories, association profiles, institutional maps, organisation profiles, relationship sociograms, social network charts, social

capital maps, physical and natural resource maps and economic flow charts. PRA techniques such as resource mapping and Venn diagrams (see Kumar, 2002) are utilised as well to document assets and their relationships. Furthermore, ABCD designers recommend the use of community economic analysis, and have provided detailed descriptions of how this can be utilised as part of the asset identification process (see Cunningham et al., 2003:21-30).

Community Asset-Counting: Implementation in Midkiwan

This third step in the ABCD process was undertaken in Midkiwan in the four sector groups over two days, 18-19 June 2002. The aim of the activity was to provide SEARSOLIN students with an opportunity to practice PRA in a community setting, and to provide the people of Midkiwan with access to an asset-documentation facility. PRA methodology was utilised, partly because it has become traditional course content at SEARSOLIN, and partly because it is a set of well-developed survey techniques already to hand. A large amount of detailed information was gathered through the application of a wide range of PRA techniques, and recorded on large charts, diagrams and maps. These were displayed communally as well as being organised into data analysis tables by the students. During the ABCD practicum, teaching staff had emphasised that PRA was to be viewed purely as a tool for the identification of assets. However, the use of this needs-based methodology within a capacities approach appears to have caused some confusion for the students and participants. The contradictions are apparent in the data analysis tables where both an assets and needs analysis have been applied to the data. It was not possible to include all of the material from the tables in a thesis of this size. Table 13 reproduces one sample from each of the four groups to serve illustrative purposes.

Table 13: Samples from PRA Data Analysis Tables

	Farmers	Lumads	Women	Youth
Category	Income	Food Security	Sanitation	Participation
PRA	seasonal calendar	food availability calendar	resource map	Venn diagram
Results Data	87% of farmer households earn less than P2,000 (approximately NZ$57.00) per month	Aug-Jan = enough food for family, Feb-July = insufficient food for family	33% of households do not have proper water- sealed toilets	Midkiwan Youth Movement Association (MYMA) plays central role supported by other sectors, needs strengthening
Causes of Problem	limited or no land, hilly stony land, few skills, low productivity	dry season - few crops grow, sell crops to augment income so family has less	poor sanitation, unaware of pollution effect, education needed	lack of leadership skills, lessened commitment
Assets Identified	land, farming skills, natural resources, livestock	farmland, reservoir, water faucets, seeds, crops, labour, family help	sufficient water, open-minded attitude of household heads	high membership numbers, church and civic affiliations, good relationship with barangay council and NGOs
Use of Assets to Achieve Vision	mobilise farmers to work together, training to improve farming techniques	need alternative crops, need training in dry season farming, need access to corn mill	hosting duties prompted them to construct a proper toilet	tap existing resources to help with community projects
Mobilisation of Links to Achieve Vision	involvement in community organising, training in sustainable agriculture and livestock production with help from outside agencies	co-ordinate with BDC, MICODA, SEARSOLIN, HPI and other agencies to get help	access water-sealed toilet bowls from Department of Health (DOH)	strengthen MYMA, training in leadership skills, get support from outside institutions

Sources: Anhtuyet et al. (2002:10); Jude et al. (2002:23); Bich et al. (2002:32); George et al. (2002:33).

Community Asset-Counting: An Assessment

Having ascertained how community asset-counting had been implemented in the case study community, the inquiry surveyed the 31 ABCD participants and 9 key informants regarding the effectiveness of the activity (see Appendix Seven). Thirty-eight of the 40 respondents affirmed asset-counting, although three commented that it was also important to take account of needs and to identify assets that needed improvement. Two respondents professed to being passive participants during the exercise because they had not understood the instructions, and therefore chose not to comment on the helpfulness or otherwise of this step in the ABCD process. The affirmative responses reflected a range of reasons for valuing community asset-counting. These have been recorded in terms of the objectives of asset-counting as an ABCD activity, although many responses, noted in italics in the following table, fell outside of the established categories. A large number of respondents contributed multiple reasons. The results are presented in Table 14.

Table 14: Respondents' Reasons for Affirming Community Asset-Counting (CAC)

Reasons for Affirming CAC	Number of Respondents who Identified Reason						KIs	Total	Total as %
	Farmers	Lumads	Women	Youth	*Female*	*Male*			
Affirmation of assets that leads to action	1	2	7	1	*10*	*1*	8	**19**	**17.5%**
Decreased dependency / Increased motivation	1	1	1		*3*		5	**8**	**7.4%**
A broader view of assets	1		2		*2*	*1*	4	**7**	**6.5%**
Identification of resources to use	3	2	9	2	*12*	*4*	9	**25**	**23.1%**
An holistic view of the community			2		*2*		1	**3**	**2.8%**
An objective view of the situation	2				*1*	*1*		**2**	**1.9%**
Enhanced valuing of what we have	4	2	7	1	*9*	*5*	1	**15**	**13.9%**
Decreased sense of deprivation			2		*2*			**2**	**1.9%**
Good tool for planning	1	1	6		*7*	*1*	6	**14**	**12.9%**
Promotion of lively debate/negotiation	2				*1*	*1*		**2**	**1.9%**
Realisation of asset diversification uses		1	1		*1*	*1*	2	**4**	**3.7%**
Ideas for problem-solving		1	1		*2*		1	**3**	**2.8%**
Equality as counterparts with the BC	1	1	1		*2*	*1*	1	**4**	**3.7%**

Source: Interviews with 38 Respondents, Cagayan de Oro and Midkiwan, June-July 2004.

A representative sample of direct quotes from respondents is presented below.

Source: Interviews with Residents, Midkiwan, 1-15 July 2004.

> *The community of Midkiwan was revealed holistically for the first time.*
>
> *The activity diminished our sense of being a deprived community.*
>
> *It challenged us to value what we have and who we are.*
>
> *For the first time people's participation and co-operation were seen as assets. This woke us up to voluntarily working together.*
>
> *There was heated debate at times regarding how to mobilise our assets for projects and plans. But it was a positive process.*
>
> *PRA encouraged the inclusion of everyone's opinions.*

I thought to myself, don't depend on the outside resources. Depend on what is within.

Our assets and resources are a great help. Before I had felt discouraged by so many problems. ABCD has encouraged me to appreciate the improvements that we have made.

Step D: Delivery and Implementation of Development Plans

As a logical next step in the ABCD process, this exercise focuses a community on developing and implementing a plan for community improvements and economic development.

Delivery and Implementation of Development Plans: The Objectives

Utilising the results of previous activities - enabling factors, best practice model, vision statements, assets maps - this stage of the ABCD process aims to create and implement development plans. Community organisations are expected to take a leading role to determine means of mobilising and linking individual capacities, social capital, institutional assets and physical resources in new combinations to realise specific goals.

Delivery and Implementation of Development Plans: The Methodology

As with the previous steps in the ABCD process, it is recommended that a broadly representative group be convened for the planning and implementation phase. The process is viewed as multidimensional and complex, with many of the steps in the ABCD process overlapping. Community members are encouraged to find ways to combine assets, individual interests, common interests and motivations to act, and to weave the threads together into achievable plans. The community development associational base is viewed as a funnel into which the economic assets, individual skills, natural/physical resources and institutional wealth are poured in varying combinations, and from which emerge new economic activities, improvements to infrastructure and enhanced local capacity (see Cunningham et al., 2003:60). A community organiser assists the process by stressing the primacy of community agendas. Relationship links among formal and informal leaders and local asset-holders are used to connect a growing number of individuals and organisations and to

gradually build a constructive working relationship among them. There is an emphasis on highlighting common ground.

Delivery and Implementation of Development Plans: Implementation in Midkiwan

Based on the outcomes of the previous steps in the ABCD implementation, development plans for Midkiwan were formulated on 20 June 2004. The SEARSOLIN students again facilitated this process in the four sector groups. The action plans were tabulated by the students and reproduced in narrative reports, although it is noted that not all sections of the plans were completed. A plenary session was held to inform all participants about the plans and facilitate a general discussion. The plenary forum agreed that the four plans would be implemented and a timeframe was set. Tables 15, 16, 17 and 18 (following) reproduce the development action plans. Considerable editing of the original tables has been undertaken to ease reader access and to correct English grammar, with care taken to retain the original meanings.

Table 15: The Farmers' Development Action Plan

Objective	Activities	Timeframe	Person/Org. Responsible	Budget	Expected Outcome
values formation	continue BEC, family prayers, rosary		BEC leaders, family heads		strong values, faith in God
develop ability to provide leadership	church leaders provide leadership training, establish links with outside institutions	21-22 June 2002	SEARSOLIN staff, students, farmers	15,030 pesos (approx. NZ$429)	training, improved farmers' leadership skills
farm production to rise above subsistence level	gain land titles, gain more land to till, capital investment, access improved seeds, buy fertiliser, follow up training in sustainable agriculture, improve water and irrigation systems	January 2003	DA, SAC, SEARSOLIN, HPI, CART, BDC		training complete, improved seeds, fertiliser, increased crop production, more produce to sell, increased income
animal dispersal project continuation	continue in HPI and CART programmes, poultry production training	2002 and 2003	HPI, MICODA		livestock passed on, training attended, project monitored and evaluated
set up a farmer co-operative	investigate training in co operatives				farmer co-operative established
awareness of environment	training in effects of tree cutting and slash and burn farming methods		BDC		cut down less trees, replant trees

Source: Anhtuyet et al. (2002:4-5/30).

Table 16: The Lumads' Development Action Plan

Objective	Activities	Timeframe	Person/Org. Responsible	Budget	Expected Outcome
land titling	call a meeting, contact DENR to obtain a land survey, facilitate land survey	July 2002 August 2002 September 2002	lumad officer, parish priest	lunch 200 pesos (approx. NZ$5.70)	fifteen families represented, land survey complete, individual land titles
food security	training in food processing and preservation, link to training agencies	August to September 2002	staff of DA, DSWD, FTC and BDC officer		fifteen families represented, ten women apply skills successfully
investigate non-conventional energy	social investigation, study and research linkages, consultations, training	August to September 2002	BDC officer, engineer from ANEC		fifteen families represented, co-ordination with other agencies
form a lumad advocacy organisation	organise community, house visits, call a meeting, set organisational structure, election of officers		leaders SEARSOLIN staff		meetings, informal discussions, effective organisation, elected officers
improve farming technology	training in sustainable agriculture and livestock raising, link to training agencies	January 2003	SAC		training conducted, successful applications
animal dispersal project	organise a meeting, attend training, contact HPI	January 2003	BDC, HPI, MICODA, lumad officers		ten households to access the project
improve water and irrigation systems	link to concerned agency to request assistance, establish rice paddy				lumad farmers to successfully establish rice paddies

Source: Jude et al. (2002:33-34).

Table 17: The Women's Development Action Plan

Objective	Activities	Timeframe	In Charge
organise sectors and strengthen MICODA	capacity-building training in organisational management, communication, leadership	June 21-22 2002	SEARSOLIN, students
sustainable farming awareness	training from SAC	July 2002	SAC
livelihoods skills development	training in livestock management and food processing of farm produce	July-August 2002	
health and sanitation awareness	health education seminar, build toilets	August-Sept 2002	
enhance skills in co-operatives, managing and entrepreneurship	training in basic recording, basic accounting and project management	August 2002	
pre-school / elementary education, enhance parenting skills	build a day care centre, CCFT sponsorship programme, CCFT pre-membership education seminar for parent	August 2002	
empower women	training in gender sensitivity	Oct 2002	

Source: Bich et al (2002:36).

Table 18: The Youth Development Action Plan

Objective	Activities	Timeframe	Person/Org. Responsible
beautify the chapel	put up a fence, plant flowers, look after chapel and garden	one Sunday a month July to Dec 2002	MYMA
improve livelihoods skills	training in handicrafts and food processing	July 2002	MYMA, XUCA
sports development	develop sportsmanship, improve skills, develop talent	August 2002	BDC, NGO, MYMA
strengthen youth group and develop leadership	leadership training, group formation, group strengthening	June 21-22 2002	SEARSOLIN, students
establish a meeting hall for the community	pahina (voluntary contribution) of labour and materials, seek funding from BDC and mayor	x2 Sundays a month July to Dec 2002	MYMA, community members

Source: George, et al. (2002:46).

Delivery and Implementation of Development Plans: The Outcomes

Table 19, 20 and 21 (following) summarise the results of the ABCD implementation in Midkiwan to date. The outcomes have been organised into three major categories - capacity development, livelihood improvements and community facilities.

As a result of XUCA intervention in Midkiwan, Christian Children's Fund Taiwan (CCFT) agreed to initiate a child sponsorship programme. A Community organiser (CO) and a Child Sponsor Family Liaison Officer (CSFLO) were appointed in 2001 by XUCA to work fulltime in this and other neighbouring communities. The employees who won the positions had participated in the 2001 PRA and 2002 ABCD practicums in Midkiwan. They work under the supervision of a CCFT co-ordinator who is based at SEARSOLIN, and who combines this role with other XUCA duties, including the co-ordination of ABCD.

Table 19: Capacity Development Outcomes of the ABCD Implementation

Programme	Time Frame	Assets Given	Links Made	Social Capital Drawn On	Stage	Outcomes to Date
CCFT child sponsorship	July 2002+	funds from CCFT	XUCA to CCFT, XUCA to/from CO and CSFLO, CO and CSFLO to/from MICODA, MICODA to/from residents	SEARSOLIN director, CCFT director, XUCA staff members, CO and CSFLO, MICODA leaders	on-going	children in CCF program, school aids supplied to children, parents express gratitude, increase in school attendance
training in community organisation, human relations, leadership, managing projects, parenting skills	July 2002+	CCFT funding, XUCA facilities, Midkiwan facilities, residents' goodwill and time			on-going	growth in leadership skills, organisational management skills, parenting skills, confidence, MICODA membership

Sources: Interviews with 40 ABCD participants and key informants, Cagayan de Oro and Midkiwan, June-July 2004; Karia et al. (2003); Nacalaban (2004); Polestico (2004); Sysamuer et al. (2003); Urbanus et al. (2001) Xavier University College of Agriculture (2002a, 2002b, 2002c).

Table 20: Livelihood Improvement Outcomes of the ABCD Implementation

Programme	Time Frame	Assets Given	Links Made	Social Capital Drawn On	Stage	Outcomes to Date
land security	2002+				ongoing	no progress
pass on the gift livestock dispersal	2001-2002	chickens, goats, pigs from HPI, voluntary co-ordination from MICODA	XUCA to HPI, XUCA to MICODA, MICODA to/ from residents	SEARSOLIN director, XUCA staff members, MICODA leaders	program complete pass on the gift ongoing	increase in backyard livestock raising, few pigs died hog cholera, increased income, better nutrition, food security rise - 3 meals a day and 30% rise in food consumption
training in sustain-able agriculture, farm tool making, food processsing, health, nutrition, herbal medicine, home gardening, pest management, livestock raising, plant breeding, organic fertilisers, soil conservation	July-Oct 2002	XUCA staff skills and time, XUCA facilities, Midkiwan facilities, residents' good will and time	XUCA to/ from MICODA leaders, XUCA and MICODA leaders to DA staff, MICODA to/from residents	XUCA staff, MICODA leaders, DA staff	complete	skills growth, 53% of trainees applied sus-tainable agriculture techniques, crop yields up, income increase, reduced cost of farm inputs, five rice paddies established, five ploughs made, residents want follow-up training to sustain skills
revolving credit fund to set up household livelihood enterprises and thus take advantage of training	2002-2004	15,000 pesos (approximately NZ$429.00) in credit funds to MICODA from SEARSOLIN, voluntary co-ordination from MICODA	XUCA to/from MICODA leaders, MICODA to/from residents	XUCA staff, MICODA leadership	program complete pay back the loan and pass on funds ongoing	increases in confidence, household livelihood enterprises, income up by between 378-1,045 pesos per month (approximately NZ$11-30)
training in food processing	2002	funds from Danish Church Aid (DAN-CHURCHAID)	XUCA to DANCHUR-CHAID	XUCA staff, MICODA leaders	complete	3 food processing enterprises set up, some inputs too expensive to continue

Sources: Interviews with 40 ABCD participants and key informants, Cagayan de Oro and Midkiwan, June-July 2004; Karia et al. (2003); Nacalaban (2004); Polestico (2004); Sysamuer et al. (2003); Urbanus et al. (2001) Xavier University College of Agriculture (2002a, 2002b, 2002c).

Table 21: Community Facilities Outcomes of the ABCD Implementation

Project	Time Frame	Assets Given	Links Made	Social Capital Drawn On	Stage	Outcomes to Date
community meeting hall and training centre	July-Dec 2002	voluntary time and labour, materials, snacks, pesos in lieu	internal links within MICODA	barangay captain, MICODA leaders, city mayor	complete	hall completed, used frequently for events, training and meetings, regular programme of training, community pride
		public land for site	MICODA to BDC			
		permission to use land, roofing iron, limestone for floor	MICODA to city mayor's office			
improvements to water and irrigation system	2002			barangay captain, MICODA leaders	five communal tubs completed, more needed	good potable water access in Lower Midkiwan, increased farm production, better system needed in Upper Midkiwan
day-care centre	2003	CCFT funds, private land, voluntary time and labour, materials	internal links within MICODA, MICODA to CCFT/ BDC	MICODA leaders, CCFT director, XUCA staff members, CO, CSFLO	ongoing	partially built but stalled due to site controversy
road upgrade	2002+	none	MICODA to BDC		ongoing	no progress
chapel beautification	July-Dec 2002	voluntary time, labour and materials	internal links between MYMA and BEC	MYMA leader BEC leaders	complete caring system ongoing	fenced and gardened chapel, regularly used, community pride, stronger faith

Sources: Interviews with 40 ABCD participants and key informants, Cagayan de Oro and Midkiwan, June-July 2004; Karia et al. (2003); Nacalaban (2004); Polestico (2004); Sysamuer et al. (2003); Urbanus et al. (2001) Xavier University College of Agriculture (2002a, 2002b, 2002c).

The role of the community organiser is focused on advocacy, logistical support, the co-ordination of plans and the provision of training. The CSFLO is officially responsible for liaison between sponsors and families. In effect, these two employees have been working as a team to assist MICODA to implement the development plans in Midkiwan. They are responsible for implementing a monthly training programme focused on developing the abilities of residents. Attendance at the courses has been consistently high and there is a consensus amongst the participants that the training is of benefit to them.

Step E: Leveraging External Resources

This step in the ABCD process is focused on leveraging outside resources that can support the implementation of development plans.

Leveraging External Resources: The Objectives

A community association aims to make links with external agencies to access advice, funding and other resources needed for the fulfilment of the

development plans. There are two prerequisites. The association should have achieved an initial position of strength and autonomy from which to negotiate. It is thus less likely to be taken over by the agendas of outside organisations. Furthermore, a display of initiative and self-reliance is considered more likely to establish credibility with external organisations and therefore lead to successful requests for assistance. Community members and all others associated with the initiative are required to activate personal and institutional social capital to make links with the external environment. While gaining access to useful resources, it is expected that residents will develop a greater breadth of social capital themselves. A spin-off effect is envisioned as links between the community members, external catalysts and outsiders interweave and develop. A further objective is focused on training to build local capacity for the successful leveraging of external assets.

Leveraging External Resources: The Methodology

As the community develops its vision and plans, core project groups are encouraged to contact agencies whose mandates are consistent with the objectives of the plan. Personal, familial, occupational and professional networks (social capital) are utilised to make contact with outside institutions. A resident may know someone or have a family member on staff, or may have accessed help from the agency in the past. In communities where links are minimal, community development officers will be required to use their own social capital to assist in developing the social capital of residents by linking them to appropriate outside agencies. The community organiser will work to decrease dependency by assisting local people to develop their own abilities to leverage external resources. This may require the provision of training in meeting participation, negotiation skills, consultation procedures and project proposal writing.

Leveraging External Resources: Implementation and Outcomes in Midkiwan[36]

This step in the ABCD process in Midkiwan was completed through a needs-based approach to community development. As a result of the 2001 XUCA initiatives, SEARSOLIN students had identified the development needs of Midkiwan residents through PRA and problem identification activities and written them into action plans. Outside agencies were thus approached on the conventional basis of their anticipated ability to meet these needs.

A range of internal and external agents utilised a wide diversity of social capital networks to secure outside resources. Prior to ABCD, members of the Midkiwan BEC group had been successful in utilising personal social capital within the barangay and city locality to secure resources for community improvements. These developments had included a reservoir, fishponds, three potable water faucets, a cemented basketball court, a cemented section of road in Lower Midkiwan and a weekly jeepney service. Similar links were utilised by MICODA and the Midkiwan Youth Movement Association (MYMA) leadership to implement the ABCD plans in 2002, including the leveraging of land use agreements for the community hall and day-care centre, and some material resources for the construction of the hall and water tubs.

XUCA staff activated extensive networks to access two international aid agencies, Christian Children's Fund Taiwan (CCFT) and Heifer Projects International (HPI), and gain significant financial and capacity-building resources. The director of CCFT is a former SEARSOLIN student. He had expressed an interest to the director of the institute in forming partnerships with communities in Cagayan de Oro at a time when the XUCA was seeking sources of funding to implement the development plans that had been made in Midkiwan. An agreement was reached between CCFT, XUCA and the newly formed MICODA to begin a child sponsorship programme in Midkiwan. CCFT agreed to fund two support positions, the Community Organiser (CO) and the

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[36] Sources of information in this section: Interviews with 40 ABCD participants and key informants, Cagayan de Oro and Midkiwan, June-July 2004; Polestico (2004); Nacalaban (2004); Xavier University College of Agriculture (2002a, 2002b, 2002c).

Child Sponsorship Family Liaison Officer (CSFLO), as well as to provide funding for the building of the proposed day-care (pre-school education) centre. The director of SEARSOLIN is a member of the Board of Directors of HPI. At his suggestion XUCA staff approached and successfully leveraged an agreement from this international agency to fund a pass-on-the-gift livestock dispersal programme that would be managed by appointed project officers from MICODA. The offspring of the initial dispersal of chickens, pig and goats has been, and continues to be, distributed amongst Midkiwan households who have indicated interest in participating. The revolving credit fund that supports new livelihood initiatives in Midkiwan was initially advocated and resourced by the SEARSOLIN management, and is now administered by appointed MICODA officers. XUCA utilised university contacts and the resources of its many development units to provide the training programmes carried out in 2002 and 2003. The current training being offered to Midkiwan residents is funded by CCFT and organised by the CO and CSFLO, who draw their resources and social capital from a variety of sources, including professional community development contacts and the extensive XU networks.

XUCA set out to develop the social capital of Midkiwan residents by holding some of the training on-site. For most residents attending the courses, this was the first time that they had entered a university or had contact with university staff and culture. A number of participants related positive feelings regarding this experience and a desire to continue building their links with XUCA. The CO and CSFLO have worked successfully as a team to build local social capital and develop local capacity. The community workers arranged for MICODA leaders to accompany them to meetings with relevant organisations and individuals, such as government departments, local authorities, city business people, community organisations and other community development associations. For many residents this was the first contact they had made with such organisations in the role of community representatives seeking external assets. The community workers have modelled effective consultation and negotiation behaviour at the meetings, and coached the MICODA members to develop these roles by observation and practice. Over the last two years, they have gradually stepped back as MICODA members have developed the confidence

and skills to attend and take part in the meetings independently. With their sense of authority growing, locals now initiate many such contacts independently, with the CO and CSFLO providing advice and training in related skills. Resources that allow the Midkiwan residents to exercise their increasing social capital, such as transport, childcare and training are funded by CCFT. The last time the researcher had contact with the MICODA leadership, they were meeting enthusiastically with a local nursery business owner whom they had met by chance through the CO at a development seminar in a neighbouring barangay. Impressed with their initiative, the businessperson had offered to donate seedlings to MICODA, to be planted by residents to beautify the Midkiwan roadsides.

Initially, the community workers visited Midkiwan frequently to consult and organise. However, in a bid to develop the confidence and social capital of MICODA members, the organisers invited the residents to attend meetings at the community development offices at XUCA. The MICODA leaders now visit the offices regularly for consultation meetings. A MICODA member who had previously developed rudimentary word processing skills has been encouraged to develop her abilities and act as the wordsmith for the organisation. The CO provides access to a computer and training in computer skills. During interviews, many participants spoke of their feelings of appreciation toward the CO and the CSFLO for their efforts in the community, and expressed concern regarding the possibility of a premature withdrawal of CCFT funding. A consensus of opinion maintained that, although it was understood that the long-term goal is to build local capacity in Midkiwan to such a degree that the community will operate independently, there remains as yet a need for funding, advocacy, advice, logistical support, training and resource access.

With the agreement of the residents of Midkiwan, XU initiated the 2001 development programmes as a way of fulfilling a community outreach mission. As previously discussed, one result was the formation of MICODA as a community associational base. By the time the 2002 ABCD initiative got under way, therefore, the community was in a stronger position to formally negotiate its development plans with outside agencies and take greater control of the

process. Although XUCA accessed the CCFT and HPI projects, it has handed over management of them to MICODA. Currently, the power to make and implement decisions regarding community development in Midkiwan is a complexly negotiated, finely balanced process shared by three major stakeholders, XUCA, BBC and MICODA. At an individual agency and day-to-day level, decisions are made by what appears to be an even-handed dialogue between XUCA staff, the CO, the CSFLO and MICODA elected officials.

Step F: Formation of a Community Foundation

The institution of a community foundation or development association is considered a crucial last step in the ABCD process. Community foundations are defined as private, non-profit, independent organisations.

Formation of a Community Foundation: The Objectives

A community development foundation is formed to take responsibility for carrying forward the plans that have been made through the application of the ABCD activities. Its role is focused on sustaining and extending the development process. Furthermore, the existence of an overarching organisation, the express purpose of which is community development, is expected to help ensure that community development is locally defined and locally controlled, with external agencies in a support role. As the community develops capacity to drive the development, lobbies for the fulfilment of plans and scales up activities, challenges are expected to arise. Legal or structural blocks may be encountered and social capital that has been developed may diminish. Community conflict may increase with a corresponding disruption of co-operation and erosion of social cohesion. Other problems may involve doubt, confusion, corruption, diffusion, frustration, and fatigue. One purpose of the community development organisation is to address such challenges and co-ordinate solutions.

Formation of a Community Foundation: The Methodology

Although the formation of an associational base is posited as the last step in the ABCD model, in practice this may occur at any stage of the process. During the asset-counting activities, local associations will have been identified. If the activity has met its goals successfully, the organisations within a community will

have developed stronger links and an amount of common ground. Community organisers are expected to focus on the possibility of forming an overarching development foundation, and work toward this end in the knowledge that such proceedings are a multifaceted and complex process.

Formation of a Community Foundation: Implementation in Midkiwan [37]

Through its original community involvement programme, XUCA had attracted the support of HPI and CCFT. Both these organisations had required the formation of a registered community body through which to conduct programmes. XUCA staff and community members met during the PRA activities in mid 2001. A decision to instigate such a body was made at the meeting so that the community could access the resources on offer. The ABCD co-ordinator and CO assisted the community members to design a democratic organisational structure and MICODA was formally instituted and registered in 2001. Thus, by the time that the full ABCD process was begun in the community in 2002, Step F had already been achieved.

MICODA was formed from a nucleus of members of BEC, an existing Catholic organisation in Midkiwan. Prior to the involvement of XU, the BEC lay priest had led this group in initiating community improvements in the absence of an active formal leadership (Foster, 2001:15). The parish priest acted as the original link between this group and the KKP, when the latter XU extension department had requested permission to conduct its original 2001 survey in the parish of Lumbia. Approximately 15 active members of BEC coalesced into an informal leadership group who co-operated with the survey-takers, encouraged other community members to participate in the XU activities and eventually took the decision to found MICODA. Many are current office-bearers in the organisation.

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[37] Sources of information in this and the following section: Interviews with 40 ABCD participants and key informants, Cagayan de Oro and Midkiwan, June-July 2004; Polestico (2004); Nacalaban (2004); Xavier University College of Agriculture (2002a, 2002b, 2002c).

Formation of a Community Foundation: Outcomes

Structure and Operation

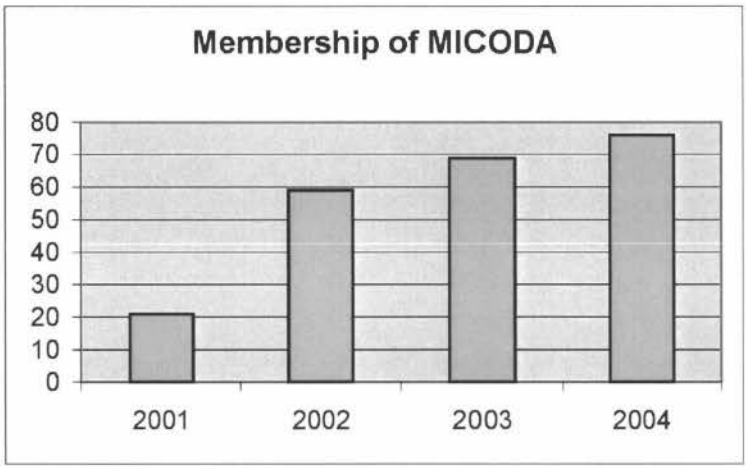
Typical of many Filipino organisations, the community development association in Midkiwan is hierarchically structured and underscored by a democratic constitution (see Appendix Eight). Office-holder elections are held regularly and democratic meeting procedures followed. Many residents indicated that their membership of, or officer status in, this democratic organisation was a first time experience for them. During discussions and interviews respondents expressed positive views regarding the organisation's functioning, with most expressing the opinion that MICODA was democratic in its operations and was representing members adequately. Office-bearers are elected officials who are also accountable through the delivery of oral reports at regular association meetings. The association itself is held to account by the international funding agencies associated with its work through the delivery of regular written reports. Currently, the community organisers and ABCD co-ordinators write these reports with input from MICODA members. In the long-term, it is anticipated that office-holders will develop the capacity to undertake all the organisational and accountability tasks required of the organisation.

Membership

From an original 21 members at inception, membership of MICODA at 29 June 2004 stood at 76, representing a growth rate over three years of 87.3% (Figure 4, following page). MICODA currently represents a remarkable 82% of households in Midkiwan. Membership fees are set at five pesos (approximately NZ 7 cents) per month.

Of the 36 residents who participated in the research programme, 31 were members of MICODA and expressed support for the organisation. The five non-members of MICODA were asked for their reasons for not joining the association. Four indicated support for the organisation but said that work commitments kept them too busy to attend meetings. The fifth respondent said that the current conflict in the organisation was disturbing and indicated that she might join in the future when the conflict was resolved.

Figure 4: Membership Growth of the Midkiwan Community Development Association



Source: Nacalaban (2004:3)

Leadership

The 40 interviewees indicated significant increases in leadership motivation, pro-activity and effectiveness in the case study community. This was particularly expressed through MICODA leaders' attendance at training events and development meetings, their willingness to co-operate with others' initiatives and suggest initiatives of their own, and in members' satisfaction with developments to date. One office-holder noted during an interview that the leadership of MICODA had approached outside agencies with ideas for projects, rather than the other way around. She highlighted how the organisation actively works to keep their agenda to the fore to maintain the momentum of developments, and to remind outsiders to continue to fulfil their obligations in the partnership. MICODA office-bearers who were interviewed maintained that they were developing skills and confidence through training and experience, with the support of the community organisers assigned to assist them.

Performance

The respondents who had participated in the research into the ABCD implementation in Midkiwan were also surveyed for their views regarding the performance of MICODA. All 40 respondents indicated approval for the organisation and identified a range of reasons for their views, with many offering

several indicators of success. The results are summarised in Table 22 (to follow).

Table 22: Respondents' Reasons for Affirming the Performance of MICODA

Reasons for affirming MICODA	Number of Respondents who Identified Reason							Total	Total as %
	Farmers	Lumads	Women	Youth	*Female*	*Male*	KIs		
Provides effective leadership	5	4	14	1	*19*	*5*	7	**31**	**32.6%**
Facilitates devt opportunities	6	8	10	1	*20*	*5*	9	**34**	**35.7%**
Facilitates sector representation	2	1	1		*3*	*1*	5	**9**	**9.4%**
Well organised and operated			1		*1*		2	**3**	**3.2%**
Sees challenges as opportunities	1		1		*1*	*1*	1	**3**	**3.2%**
Improving relation ship with BBC	1	1	2	1	*2*	*3*	2	**7**	**7.4%**
Improved ability to leverage assets			1		*1*		2	**3**	**3.2%**
Shows example of community caring		1	3		*4*		1	**5**	**5.3%**

Source: Interviews with 40 Respondents, Cagayan de Oro and Midkiwan, June-July 2004.

An Overall Rating for ABCD in Midkiwan

The asset-based project had set out to instigate development in the rural community of Midkiwan. The 36 residents who had been involved in the research, comprising 31 ABCD participants and 5 key informants, were thus asked to assign an overall rating to the ABCD initiative from their perspective as community members. Table 23 records the results, while Table 24 (following page) presents the range of reasons contributed by respondents for assigning the ratings.

Table 23: Respondents' Ratings of ABCD in Midkiwan

Rating	Number of Respondents who Assigned Rating							Total	Total as %
	Farmers	Lumads	Women	Youth	KIs	*Female*	*Male*		
1 = Poor								**0**	**0%**
2 = Fair		1				*1*		**1**	**2.8%**
3 = Good	1	4	2	1	2	*8*	*2*	**10**	**27.8%**
4 = Very Good	5	4	4		3	*13*	*3*	**16**	**44.4%**
5 = Excellent	1	1	6	1		*6*	*3*	**9**	**25.0%**
Totals	7	10	12	2	5	*28*	*8*	**36**	**100%**

Source: Interviews with 36 Residents, Midkiwan, June-July 2004.

Table 24: Respondents' Reasons for Assigning Ratings of ABCD

Rating	Range of Reasons Proffered for Assigning Ratings of ABCD in Midkiwan	
2	• Not everyone has benefited from ABCD yet	
3	• We have more independence to decide our goals • The process of development / training is underway • We still need more support from outside agencies • The lumad community is still relatively isolated	• We are still in the process of changing attitudes • The land issue for the Lumads is unresolved • Some of the livestock died • Not everyone has benefited yet
4	• We are working together / learning from experience • A lot of improvements but room for more • We have realised many benefits but still some way to go and many things yet to be achieved	• Not everyone is on board yet • The internal conflict is yet to be resolved • We could apply still more of the ABCD philosophy and develop a deeper understanding of it
5	• Many projects have succeeded • There are significant increases in skills and confidence to run our own development process • There is plenty of support here and from outside as well • I personally benefited a lot from the livelihoods and other projects • We are very active now as a community	• Without the ABCD initiative there would be no improvements and no MICODA • More important than individual projects, ABCD changed my attitude from negative to positive - a half empty glass to one that was half full • Despite my illiteracy, ABCD allowed me to participate and become involved in the community in a way that I have never done before

Source: Interviews with 36 Residents, Midkiwan, June-July 2004.

THE OVERALL OUTCOMES OF ABCD IN MIDKIWAN

In assessing the overall outcomes of the ABCD initiative in the case study community, 48 respondents were surveyed. This comprises the 31 ABCD participants and 9 key informants already identified, and an additional 8 key informants who are associated with the case study community in a variety of capacities. They include the barangay captain, the sitio leader, the barangay health worker, 2 staff members of XUCA and 3 SEARSOLIN students.

Benefits

Respondents were asked to comment on what they saw as the overall benefits of ABCD in Midkiwan. The results are summarised in Table 25 (following page), where a long list of categories has been included. It was decided to retain this number to facilitate a fuller understanding by the reader. Although some categories were developed from the overall aims of ABCD, the majority were suggested by respondents themselves as they reflected at length on their experiences in the ABCD implementation in their community. These considerations were characterised by a depth of understanding on the part of a number of interviewees regarding the reversal of thinking required by the assets approach.

Table 25: Respondents' Views of the Overall Benefits of ABCD in Midkiwan

Benefit	Number of Respondents who Identified Benefit							Total	Total as %
	Farmers	Lumads	Women	Youth	*Female*	*Male*	KIs		
Local motivation increased	3	3	5		*9*	*2*	11	**22**	**6.8%**
Improved local facilities	3	3	6	1	*11*	*2*	7	**20**	**6.2%**
More livelihood opportunities	4	5	12	1	*17*	*5*	10	**32**	**9.9%**
Increases in income	6	4	11	1	*16*	*6*	5	**27**	**8.3%**
Local capacities/ skills developed	4	7	9	1	*17*	*4*	11	**32**	**9.9%**
Better food security / health	1	1	4		*6*		5	**11**	**3.4%**
More educational opportunity	1	4	4		*9*		6	**15**	**4.6%**
Increased confidence			6	1	*6*	*1*	7	**14**	**4.4%**
Increased commitment	1	4	10	1	*12*	*4*	3	**19**	**5.9%**
More residents involved			1		*1*		3	**4**	**1.2%**
Recognition of individual abilities	1					*1*	1	**2**	**0.6%**
More internal link ages/ unity		3			*2*	*1*	8	**11**	**3.4%**
Strengthened relationships	2	2	6	1	*9*	*2*	6	**17**	**5.3%**
Developed spirit of helping / caring	1	3	4	1	*6*	*3*	5	**14**	**4.4%**
Improved peace and order		2			*2*			**2**	**0.6%**
Community self respect increased	1		3	2	*5*	*1*	10	**16**	**5.0%**
More productive links to outside	2	2	5	1	*6*	*4*	3	**13**	**4.0%**
More effective than previous approaches	3		2	1	*3*	*3*	12	**18**	**5.6%**
Holistic approach to development			2		*2*		3	**5**	**1.5%**
Change from deficiency to capacities view	2	3	4		*8*	*1*	12	**21**	**6.5%**
Experience of hope for the future			5		*5*		3	**8**	**2.5%**

Source: Interviews with 48 Respondents, Cagayan de Oro and Midkiwan, June-July 2004.

Issues

During interviews, respondents identified five issues associated with the ABCD project in Midkiwan. Of these, the most significant is an ongoing conflict that has emerged within MICODA, referred to by 93% of interviewees. This conflict appears to have its origins in a change of leadership in the organisation, whereby a previous leader was voted out during the last elections. The resulting tension is often expressed in disagreements regarding MICODA plans, and is

currently centred on the siting of the day-care centre. The BBC has become involved and is planning an assembly to settle this issue in the near future. However, during a discussion the ex-leader expressed support for MICODA and its activities. She claimed her democratic right to her opinion, and maintained that vigorous debate and the expression of a variety of views indicates health in an organisation. In a related matter, six respondents initiated discussion regarding rivalry that has emerged between some residents of Lower Midkiwan and Upper Midkiwan. All but one indicated that ongoing and open communication was helping to address the issue. The sixth respondent noted that unless benefits were fairly distributed between the two sections of the community, it was likely that a split would develop in the organisation.

A third issue was focused on a lack of motivation on the part of the official sitio leadership, although five respondents had noted a gradual improvement and signs of increasing involvement. This was considered by three to be a response to the enthusiasm and initiative shown by MICODA leaders, and to the interest in the community being expressed by a variety of outside sources, including this researcher. The fourth concern centres on the landless status of many of the lumad farmers in the community. Four lumad respondents indicated that until this fundamental matter was resolved, benefits resulting from community development would be limited. A fifth issue relates to the sustainability of the ABCD momentum, amid community fears that external supports might be withdrawn prematurely and lead to a reversal of much of the progress that had been achieved to date.

Migration

In November 2002, SEARSOLIN students conducted a research project to ascertain changes in migration as one indicator of the success of ABCD in Midkiwan. The results recorded a slight decrease in migration out of the case study community (Polestico, 2004:5). Of the 36 residents who were interviewed in this research project, all but two lumad farmers expressed their intention to remain in the community for the foreseeable future. Both identified their landless status as a reason to leave the community.

Community-Driven Development

The 48 respondents were asked for their reflections regarding the control of development in Midkiwan. A majority of respondents, 63%, maintained that the residents were driving their own development process through MICODA, while 37% emphasised that community development in Midkiwan was, and should be, a partnership between MICODA, XUCA, CCFT and the BBC.

Sustainability and the Future

All respondents indicated support for sustaining the ABCD initiative. In particular, there was a focus on implementing the remaining items of the plans - the road upgrade, the day-care centre and resolution of the land security issue. Respondents specified support for maintaining the momentum of the training programmes to ensure application and to build on what had already been learnt. There is a desire for ongoing fiscal and other support from external agencies such as XUCA and CCFT, so that livelihoods projects that generate income can continue and develop, and so that the community's children will continue to improve their educational access. Most residents expressed a strong desire to continue to build Midkiwan as a peaceful and united community.

The chapter has presented the results of research into the instigation of ABCD in a rural Filipino community. The complex process whereby the approach was implemented in the case study community has been outlined in detail and the outcomes of the initiative have been detailed in qualitative and quantitative formats. In the following chapter, the methodological framework of the study is utilised to present a critical analysis of the findings.

CHAPTER SIX: ABCD IN RETROSPECT

INTRODUCTION

This research project was based on two items of inquiry. The first item sought to explore how the ABCD approach is applied in practice within the context of a developing country. The country chosen was the Philippines because it is one of a handful of developing countries where ABCD is being utilised as part of ongoing efforts to effect successful community development. Thus, a detailed description of the process whereby the assets approach was implemented in a Filipino community was provided in Chapter Five. The second item of inquiry was focused on the outcomes of the ABCD project. Data and interviews were summarised to present the results, both in terms of the effectiveness of the methodology as viewed by participants and key informants, and in terms of outcomes for the community. In this chapter the methodological framework of the study, as outlined in Chapter Four, is utilised as a way of structuring a discussion of the findings. Thus a critical engagement with the results is focused on ABCD in relationship to five of its foundational premises - the concept of social capital, assets theorising, capacity-focused alternatives to deficiency models, community-driven development and civil society agency. The discussion will incorporate a particular focus on the Filipino and developing country contexts.

ABCD AS AN APPLICATION OF SOCIAL CAPITAL THEORY

Theorists (Cunningham et al., 2003:17; Foster and Mathie, 2001:3; Mathie and Cunningham, 2003a:479) propose that in treating social relationships as assets, ABCD becomes a practical application of the concept of social capital. While the study did not set out to test this proposition, its findings highlight aspects of social capital theorising that are of interest in the continuing debate.

The findings indicate that internal social capital has been both utilised and developed through an ABCD approach. The amplified levels of reciprocity, and the associational norms and networks - co-operation, unity, social connections, internal cohesion - developed through the initiative can be viewed as evidence of social relations in which social capital has been generated. These underscore

the success of ABCD in the case study community. Economic and other activity was stimulated through the diversification of social networks, and in turn generated opportunities to increase and further diversify stocks of social capital. Thus the development process was sustained and scaled up. This result supports the argument (Mathie and Cunningham, 2003b:7; Putman, 1993, 2000) that those who are socially connected in relationships of trust have a greater propensity for collective action, and that this mutually beneficial activity contributes to increases in social capital. Putman's (2000:350-367) suggestion that social capital can act as an equaliser when bridging social capital links people of different affiliations is also borne out. In the case study community the integration of the indigenous population, both internally and within the community, was promoted through the ABCD activities.

The research findings highlight the way in which community leaders and ABCD practitioners utilised their social connections to gain outside sources of funding and materials for the community projects. Social capital, utilised by both internal and external agents, is thus identified as an important ingredient in securing external resources. Of particular significance is the way in which a large outside organisation is able to utilise high levels of social capital to access resources for a small community characterised by weak connections to the external institutional environment. However, it must be acknowledged that the resources gained through an outside agency dictated the types of projects that were undertaken. Although in the case study locality this does not appear to have been a contentious issue, with decisions being undertaken collaboratively, it does highlight a potential issue of some significance for ABCD. As with material capital, higher levels of social capital may mean greater influence and power. It also points the way to a future where implementing agencies, such as university institutions and NGOs, act in a more neutral role as social capital brokers, increasingly linking community organisations directly to international development agencies.

Krishna's (2002:163) recommendations regarding the crucial mediating role of catalysts in activating the latent potential of social capital, and in building levels of productive social capital in localities, are also pertinent in this discussion. In

the case study community, where links with external agencies were weak, a process of piggybacking occurred. Implementing agents mobilised social capital to leverage financial and capacity-building resources, linked local stakeholders to these sources of assistance, and then stepped back to allow the community association room to develop the relationships thus engendered. One issue that arises now is the time span needed for productive levels of social capital to build and embed in poor communities. Currently the outside institution remains involved, but fears are held in the community that it may withdraw prematurely. Attention is thus focused on a monitoring role for external agency and on the development of policies that best support internally- and externally-focused social capital development without engendering long-term dependency. As well, Mathie and Cunningham (2003c:5) have drawn attention to the role of social capital in developing more effective partnerships between communities and local government. They claim a reciprocal dynamic, whereby local institutions are more responsive to communities with growing levels of social capital and these communities increasingly demand greater consideration. It would be useful to investigate this dynamic in the case study community to identify factors in the institutional environment that help to develop externally-focused social capital in communities where such connections are underdeveloped.

ABCD AS AN APPLICATION OF ASSET-BASED APPROACHES

The findings indicate a level of novelty for residents in that definitions of assets were widened beyond the material, and their attention was focused for the first time on existing strengths rather than community deficits. This exercise resulted in an expansion of the community view of what constitutes an asset, a renewed valuing of internal resources, and an appreciation of indigenous contributions. This had the effect of unifying and motivating residents and decreasing what had become known as a dole-out mentality. It led to a communal consideration of the development potential of existing assets, and subsequent efforts to create productive linkages that resulted in community improvements. These results highlight Kretzmann and McKnight's (1993:6-7,25) conceptualisation of assets as a widely inclusive term, one that recognises untapped capacities and the contributions of the traditionally marginalised. The outcomes in the case study community also bear out their claim that viewing a community as characterised

by assets is more likely to stimulate local pride and initiative than an exclusive focus on deficits. The research project endorses Green and Haines (2002:8-10) definition of community development as planned efforts to build assets that improve the local quality of life.

In the case study community social assets such as neighbourly goodwill, co-operation and unity were mobilised and strengthened, first through a needs-based intervention and then through the ABCD activities. The utilisation of these social assets provided access to other assets, and resulted in endogenous, co-ordinated development planning and implementation. Social relationships were thus central to the success of the venture. As ABCD theorists (Cunningham et al., 2003:17; Foster and Mathie, 2001:3; Mathie and Cunningham, 2003a:479-480) argue, in defining formal and informal associational life as a social asset and locating it at the centre of development, ABCD is able to incorporate a powerful development resource. As well, the findings illustrate another facet raised by these authors. Local access to internal and external assets was crucial in provisioning the community projects, and social capital played a pivot role in providing that access. However, the research results also highlight considerable reliance on external assets, especially finance, training and advice. This has been mitigated to some extent in that the early mobilisation of social assets led to the formation of the community association. Locals have thus been able to maintain official control of developments through this mandated body. Detailed analysis regarding aspects of the associational base of the initiative is offered in later sections of the chapter (see pages 108 and 110).

Bebbington (1999:2034) has argued that assets have a psychological value beyond the material, providing people with the capacity to believe in their own ideas and actions. Assets can become the basis on which residents of a locality are able to empower themselves and "change the rules of the development game". Foster and Mathie (2001:3 citing Ritchey-Vance, 2001) maintained that a lack of assets leads to a weakening of individual assertion and civic culture. In this regard, the findings highlight the growth of self-belief and civic expression in this small rural community resulting from an assets-based initiative. There

would be value in tracking developments to discover in detail how assets and capacities approaches manifest in local development action and a sense of empowerment in the case study community over time.

ABCD AS AN ASSERTION OF CAPACITIES-FOCUSED DEVELOPMENT

As a capacity-focused alternative to traditional deficiency approaches, ABCD aims to develop the capacity of local people to become agents of their own development (Kretzmann and McKnight, 1993:5-10). The discussion is therefore focused on the ways in which the initiative developed the capabilities of residents in the case study community, the capacity that has resulted and what this means for this goal of the ABCD approach.

Capacity Building

In perhaps the most heartening aspect of this study, the findings indicate that the capacities of local people have been significantly developed through the implementation of ABCD. Activities such as appreciative story-telling, vision-creation and asset-counting focused attention on internal catalysts and existing assets. One result was a decrease in a comparative mentality, and a corresponding growth in the capacity of local people to see themselves and their neighbours as capable, and their community as a place of at least some sufficiency. This had the effect of stimulating unity and motivation. The inward-looking focus of the activities appears to have strengthened community relationships, mutual support networks, problem-solving capacity and local pride, a productive feature of the ABCD approach highlighted by designers Kretzmann and McKnight (1993:4-5).

As well as increased community cohesion and attitudinal change, the findings show that local abilities, livelihood skills, and confidence have been developed through training. The particular focus of training programmes appears to be a successful collaboration between the implementing agency and residents. It has made community members aware of the opportunities open to them, while ensuring that courses are targeted at developing capacities that are valued locally. The research also discovered that leadership confidence, capacity and pro-activity has been amplified through the ABCD project. This finding supports

the claim that capacity-focused models stimulate leaders to take pride in a community's self-reliance (1993:4-5). In acting to ensure that external agencies adhere to the commitments they make, the MICODA leadership displays increasing confidence and self-assertion. ABCD in the case study community can be said to have increased productive initiative, brought concrete benefits to residents and stimulated the development of a capacities attitude. This is a small but significant beginning, and it will be important for all those involved to take steps to sustain the capabilities focus and the capacity building process.

Appreciative Inquiry

The findings highlight the success of activities based on Appreciative Inquiry in setting a positive orientation at the beginning of the development initiative. An active community group had instigated spontaneous improvements in Midkiwan before XU's intervention. In identifying this core group, XUCA staff members recognised and publicly valued the catalysing role of resident individuals and associations. They thus built upon the energy for change that already existed in the community. This had the effect of stimulating community pride and activating the community. The proposal (Cooperrider and Whitney, 1999:2; Elliot, 1999a:43;) that impetus for change can be located in peak experiences and past successes is borne out. The achievements of the initiative to date appear to be linked to the initial identification and utilisation of development energy in the case study community.

In utilising the motivational aspects of Appreciative Inquiry, the ABCD initiative also lends support to its basic premise that future conceptions of communities are held to result from current perceptions (Elliott, 1999a:12). The affirmation of individual and collective strengths can be said to have developed a sense of capacity and purpose in the case study community. Many residents appear to have internalised positive views of their initiatives and the community's capacity for improvement, and expressed a desire for further progressive action. The result echoes the basic ABCD principle that an appreciation of assets and strengths is more likely to inspire development action than an exclusive focus on problems and needs, and is more likely to lead locals to fully own a

development process (Cunningham et al., 2003:1; Mathie and Cunningham, 2003b:4-5).

Despite the orientation of the ABCD activities toward past success and current capacity - some might say because of it - a minority of interviewees expressed the view that needs and problems in the community had been ignored. This finding highlights an enduring shortcoming of the assets approach. In failing to accentuate deficiencies, it can be critiqued as academic, naive, and indifferent to genuine difficulties and entrenched poverty. Addressing this concern, Bergdall (2003:3) suggests that ABCD practitioners acknowledge the problems that are raised, but respond in ways that maintain a focus on the feasibility of local solutions using local assets. Mathie and Cunningham (2003a:478) have pointed out that the Appreciative Inquiry literature is flawed from the perspective of objective empirical inquiry. Activities such as appreciative story-telling, community vision-building and assets identification are also open to charges of idealism and manipulation. It is important therefore that designers address these issues to reinforce the credibility of ABCD as an approach that aims to genuinely assist communities to develop.

ABCD AS A VEHICLE FOR COMMUNITY-DRIVEN DEVELOPMENT

ABCD aims to foster successful community development through ensuring that residents, as citizens within the larger arena of civil society, actively drive and control a development process. A central theme therefore is the relocation of power and control to communities (Cunningham et al., 2003:7; Mathie and Cunningham, 2003a:482). In this section, the ways in which the assets approach has facilitated an active, self-determining role for residents in the case study community will be the subject of the discussion. It will encompass a number of significant issues including agency, dependency, external resources, empowerment, inclusive participation and internal conflict. ABCD also offers a format for promoting community economic development in the form of co-operatives and community-owned businesses. To date this aspect has not been utilised in the case study community and therefore did not form part of the research project.

Agency, Dependency and External Resources

An outside agency, motivated by a desire to fulfil an outreach mission, initiated ABCD in the case study community. This fact supports Bergdall's (2003:1) argument that despite the ideal of spontaneous internal action, some form of external stimulus is required to bring ABCD to the notice of the community. The actions of the staff of this institution led to the development of internal attitudinal change, productive social networks, mutual learning, and the leveraging of significant external resources. Although the implementation was initially dependent on their skills, resources and social capital, the staff attempted to minimise dependency by following the principles and practices of the ABCD approach. Formal and informal local associations were utilised to energise the development process and an independent attitude was encouraged. Local improvements that had already been undertaken through community catalysts and informal leadership were noted and publicly valued through the appreciative story-telling activity. An active community group was identified and utilised as the initial entry point into the community and as the nucleus for a foundational organisation. External agents acted to ensure that a community organisation was formed and able to assume management of the development projects to minimise their level of direct involvement. Networks connecting the association with other outsiders were widened. ABCD in the case study community has in effect been a partnership between internal and external agents. In the last year, XU has stepped back and begun focusing its attention on neighbouring localities. The community association appears to have stepped forward to take up its role more fully. The results appear to support the ABCD precept that, with a reflective approach, an external agency can work productively with a community without instilling a dependency mentality (Bergdall, 2003:10-11).

The research discovered a high level of appreciation for the intervention amongst the residents, a desire to continue the partnership with the outside institution and to stay actively engaged with other external agencies. The findings support the view of ABCD theorists Mathie and Cunningham (2003c:3), that through an assets approach local citizens are likely to accept greater responsibility as the principal agents of their own development. In the case study community, locals are increasingly directing the process themselves

through the community organisation, collaborating with a range of other stakeholders such as the university, local government and the private sector to implement plans. In effect, the ABCD initiative has resulted in a reorientation of both helpers and helpees regarding agency, responsibility and the pitfalls of a dependency mentality. In this sense, it is an improvement on previous development interventions in the locality. However, it would be naive to suppose that this is the end of the story. While managing the development process themselves, this materially poor community in a developing country will continue to depend upon external institutional advice and resources for some time to come, to sustain the development momentum thus far created.

It is important to note that the case study community is not textbook ABCD. This was not a self-starting community seeking out further resources to support already initiated internal developments. External resources had been sought and procured first as an outcome of a needs analysis, prior to the ABCD implementation. This could be viewed as a reflection of a traditional development ethos whereby a community looks to the outside for resources in the first instance, and aid organisations seek out deprived communities to help to fulfil their missions. Another consequence of the initial dependency on external resources is that community members may have related less to local people for mutual support and problem-solving, a phenomenon that Kretzmann and McKnight (1993:4-5) claim weakens relationships that traditionally link neighbours. This tendency was addressed to some extent by the assets activities in the following year.

Subsequent ABCD initiatives in neighbouring communities have also sought the support of external institutions early on in the process. From the perspective of stakeholders, this is a sensible way to proceed given the relatively poor material and environmental conditions that characterise many of the localities. This is a delicately balanced issue, whereby ABCD advocates will want to avoid creating overt dependency on outsiders while also securing necessary resources for poor localities. As ABCD designers Kretzmann and McKnight (1993:5-10) point out, while external resources are valuable, significant and sustainable

development is more likely to prevail when local residents become committed to investing themselves and their assets in the initiative.

External Agency Bias

In addition to fulfilling its outreach mission through community initiatives, XU sought suitable contexts in which to base practicums to support learning programmes. The designers of ABCD in the case study community were concerned with providing a practical experience of the assets approach for students, as well as assisting the development process. This has had a number of largely unintended impacts on the ABCD process in the case study community.

Various components of the ABCD programme were undertaken in four groups to allow students extensive opportunity to practice the method and to hone skills. Thus, the community did not work as one entity during appreciative story-telling, vision-building, asset-counting and planning activities. This resulted in the production of four visions and four sets of plans. Although a final plenary session ensured that all participants were aware of the ideas of other groups, no attempt was made to synthesise ideas into one comprehensive community development plan. To some extent, this omission may have resulted in confusion and a dilution of the effects of these methods to create a powerful and unified community impetus. However, the sectored approach did pay active attention to the inclusion of a broad representation of people in the community and thus appears to have contributed to a greater sense of unity amongst residents. Secondly, the sometimes limited abilities of the SEARSOLIN students influenced the quality of the ABCD implementation. For example, outcomes were confused with enabling factors in the appreciative story-telling activity, future community visions were sometimes expressed as objectives in the vision statements and some sections of the development plans were of variable quality, misinterpreted or incomplete.

Appreciative story-telling, community vision-building and community asset-counting are designed as group-building methods. Residents are expected to conduct the activities with one another and in so doing strengthen intra-

community connections. In the case study community, SEARSOLIN students acted as facilitators. It is, therefore, possible that residents related more to the students than one another, thus diluting the impact of the ABCD activities in building community cohesion and fostering community ownership of the process. Foster (2001:25) reports that the XUCA has since trained volunteer residents of other communities to carry out the activity themselves, thus addressing this issue to some extent.

Because XUCA was in the process of changing its approach to community development, a needs-based method, PRA, was utilised within an asset-based model. Although seemingly innocuous, the practice caused confusion, and drew students and residents back to a focus on needs and problems. This is illustrated in the tables that presented the results of asset-counting activities. Theorists Bergdall (2003:11) and Mathie and Cunningham (2003b:11) propose caution in attempting to blend the two approaches, advising ABCD practitioners to maintain conceptual consistency given that ABCD was designed to counter the unintended consequences of deficiency models. There is a need for asset identification techniques that are designed specifically for a capacities-focused approach to address this issue.

The findings highlight how XUCA staff members inadvertently dictated the order in which the steps of the ABCD model (see Figure 3, page 61) were undertaken in the case study community. The last two steps had been achieved in large part under a needs-based approach and the designers set out to implement the first four steps the following year. The danger of leveraging external resources early on is that they may come to dominate decisions regarding the types of improvements to be embarked upon. This can defeat the ethos of ABCD, although it could be said that the idealism of the approach must be balanced with practical realities. For example, XUCA staff members maintain that in many poor Filipino communities, development organisations are absent and external resources are difficult to secure. In their view, the achievement of the last two steps first proved effective in the case study community, and they have followed a similar procedure in neighbouring localities. This finding can also be viewed

as illustrating the flexibility of ABCD, accentuating its potential adaptability to the unique circumstances of communities in different countries of the world.

Perhaps it is a Western bias that assumes that a community has the capacity to begin the ABCD process from Step A and that the model should follow a linear, logical order. There is agreement in the literature that the sequencing of ABCD activities should be flexible and tailored to individual community circumstances. At the risk of accusations of Western linear thinking, this researcher recommends a revised sequence whereby the identification of assets is implemented before the vision-building activity. This would provide residents with a fuller appreciation of local successes and resources from which to create a community development vision. The splitting of Step D into two steps, the first planning and the second implementation, might assist in keeping the process clearly defined.

A Foundational Association

In the case study community, residents can be said to be determining the development process through their membership of the community development organisation, MICODA. Cunningham et al. (2003:7,25,65) maintain that a foundational association is a central aspect of an ABCD implementation. It provides a mandated vehicle through which to manage and sustain a development process, ensuring that it remains locally defined and controlled, with external agencies in a support role. Although designed as a last step in ABCD, the foundational association was instituted first in the case study community, as an outcome of a needs-based initiative. Outside agents were instrumental in this development, the original impetus focused on satisfying the legal requirements of two international development agencies to secure outside funding. The effectiveness of the community development association in fulfilling its mandate does not appear to have been compromised by these somewhat ironic facts. Democratically mandated with a voluntary membership and consensual basis, this organisation is the linchpin that holds the development process together. As a private, autonomous body, it is able to make independent decisions regarding the definition of problems and opportunities, and the appropriateness of solutions and actions. The research

results provide evidence of community satisfaction with the organisation's performance in managing projects, initiating ideas for further improvements and sustaining the development process. In highlighting the increasing transfer of skills from official community organisers to MICODA office-holders, the initiative in the case study community adheres to the ABCD goals of self-determination and local capacity building.

Empowerment

Mathie and Cunningham (2003a:482) argue that a central theme of ABCD is the relocation of power from external actors to communities. Implementing agencies are expected to facilitate genuine community control. Through the ABCD activities and the community association, local people in the case study community have gained a voice in development decisions. In facilitating the activities and the instigation of an associational base, the implementing agency has acted to empower that local voice. However, differential levels of power within and between organisations and individuals are acknowledged. Furthermore, ABCD is a two-way street, benefiting many parties. For example, Foster (2001:29) draws attention to the sustainable agriculture bias running through many of the plans, highlighting the dominant role that the Sustainable Agriculture Centre (SAC) has been able to achieve. As for the other units within XUCA, ABCD in the region can be seen as benefiting them by ensuring continuing relevance for the university's community outreach programmes and therefore funding, employment and possible expansion.

Currently, decision-making is a joint venture between external agencies and the local organisation, with all stakeholders depending on the goodwill and cooperation of the others for an effective continuation of the initiative. Whether this amounts to control is a moot point, as this informal power-sharing arrangement has not been tested by significant policy variance. Given that residents continue to be grateful for, and appreciative of, external agency contributions, these matters are likely to remain dormant for some time yet.

Inclusive Participation

When instigating ABCD in Midkiwan, XUCA was pro-active in facilitating a broad representation of community sectors. This resulted in the cohesive inclusion of residents who had little previous experience of community participation, a number of whom were historically marginalised indigenous people. The particular focus on including indigenous people as a group in their own right has fostered what might be termed a political and cultural re-awakening within the tribe. Through membership of the overarching association, and notwithstanding the interplay of internal power dynamics, all sectors and individuals in this community have the opportunity to influence developments. The ABCD implementation was made easier by the fact that the case study community is reasonably homogenous, attributable to the centrality of a common religion. In identifying and working through an existing group that had established positive links within the community, the instigating agency secured an initially high level of support for the ABCD project. As well, the foundational association was based on the nucleus of the group and it is likely that this has helped to secure its mandate. Although there is a conflict, its nature is personal rather than the result of entrenched community divisions.

Internal Conflict

The findings indicate that a significant, though contained, conflict has emerged in the case study community, originating in a recent development association leadership change. Although this conflict does not appear to seriously threaten the development initiative, its continuing unresolved status has the potential to weaken the overall impetus for improvement. Assets theorists Green and Haines (2002:11) point out that, in creating an economic stake and a set of internal obligations, an asset-based model has the potential to significantly disturb the status quo and alter existing relationships. Externally-funded projects and an internal development authority were established in the case study community through the ABCD initiative. This can be viewed as raising the stakes and increasing competition for financial assets and livelihoods resources, and for office-bearing positions and status. As well, the ABCD initiative led to a scaling up of internal contact. Although considered commendable in the ABCD literature, increased levels of social contact can

lead to both constructive and destructive results. Mathie and Cunningham (2003b:13) maintain that users of an ABCD strategy need to understand how social structures have historically evolved, and the potential effect of an ABCD process on social relationships and patterns of association. There is perhaps a call for the method to systemise processes that anticipate and address internal conflict, and to establish management practices that prevent it from escalating. This raises questions regarding whose responsibility this would be under an ABCD initiative, as well as drawing attention to the identification and utilisation of culturally appropriate conflict resolution processes in developing countries.

ABCD AS AN EXPRESSION OF CIVIL SOCIETY AGENCY

Through its focus on community and citizen-driven development, ABCD actualises an expanded role for civil society (Mathie and Cunningham, 2003a:482-483). The discussion will focus on the ways in which space has been created for the agency of civil society in the case study community, as well as the results, implications and associated issues.

Civil Society

The formation of a democratically constituted development association was a significant outcome of the ABCD initiative in the case study community, and has important implications that go beyond specific development goals. Community members are represented at the local, regional and national political levels through democratic elections. For the first time, however, the development will of the case study community has been mandated in a civil society organisation at the local level. Despite unresolved conflict, the association is growing in membership and is developing internal and external credibility and support. It retains the power to manage the development projects that have been instigated and to decide on future directions, and is developing links to private businesses, local authorities and international agencies on its own behalf. Furthermore, the community association in Midkiwan has instigated communication with at least one of several similar organisations that have been formed in neighbouring communities as an outcome of ABCD implementations. Locals are exploring the potential for mutual support, resource sharing and joint initiatives. The possibility of future federation is mooted, bringing with it the

prospect of increased political influence and leverage capacity. As associations specifically designed to promote community advancement, they represent a unique development in the locality. Of significance to the residents of Midkiwan, the collective voice has been expressed for the first time in their community.

Democracy

Through participation in the community development association, local people in the case study locality are developing the capacity to operate as office holders, leaders and organisers. Elections and meetings provide members, especially indigenous people with little previous personal involvement, with first-hand experience of democratic operating procedures. These developments are likely to up-skill residents and help them to make the psychological transformation from an authoritarian to a participatory mindset, and thus contribute to a strengthening of democracy in this community.

The chapter has presented an analysis of the findings of the research in relationship to five of the theoretical premises of the assets-based approach. In answer to the central question of the study, it was found that ABCD had been implemented in the case study community through the agency of an external institution. While a number of contentious issues have emerged, the role of ABCD in bringing to the fore in the case study community a greater focus on, and use of, local social capital, community assets and individual capacities is of particular significance. Community-driven development has been instigated and the agency of civil society appears enhanced through the assets-based approach. In the next and final chapter, seven premises of ABCD that form the conceptual basis of this thesis are revisited, relating them to the wider literature, drawing some conclusions and raising a number of questions. Discussion then returns to the three global themes that emerged during the course of this study, thus extending the ideas foreshadowed in the introductory chapter.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSIONS

A SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTERS

The rationale for this study, elaborated in the introductory chapter, rests on an interest in ABCD as a development approach applicable in the developing world. Of particular note is its potential use as a means of decreasing traditional dependency mindsets and increasing the possibilities of local capacity and community control. An introduction to seven related premises that underpin ABCD, and which form a conceptual framework for this study, was undertaken in Chapter One. These are focused on ABCD as an expression of the renewed interest in local-level development, the agency of civil society and community-driven development initiatives. ABCD is also presented as a critical response to needs-based development approaches, as an expression of a capacities-focused alternative, and as the practical application of assets theories and the concept of social capital. Three interwoven themes that have arisen as a result of a consideration of the ABCD approach - the development of capacity and the implications for practitioners, the meanings of empowerment, and the social processes of development - were also introduced in Chapter One.

The theoretical base of ABCD was elaborated in Chapter Two with reference to its underlying concepts and related international development literature. Chapter Three presented the context for the case study research. This included a brief review of the history and development of the Philippines and of Mindanao Island as it relates to the major themes of ABCD, along with a detailed description of the case study community of Midkiwan within its local context.

In Chapter Four the research philosophy that informs this study was discussed, along with an outline of research design, reflections on the fieldwork and ethical considerations. Of particular importance in this chapter was the presentation of the central question of the study. This focused on the way that ABCD had been applied in a developing country context, and on the results to date. Five theoretical premises were selected to form a methodological framework for the case study investigation and analysis, specifically ABCD as an application of

social capital and assets theories, as capacities-focused and community-driven development, and as an expression of the agency of civil society.

The central questions of the study were addressed In Chapter Five and Chapter Six. ABCD was initiated in the case study community through the agency of an external institution. The complexities of the implementation process, a blend of needs and capacities approaches, was detailed in Chapter Five along with the identification of outcomes. The findings indicated that ABCD had succeeded in achieving many of its aims, resulting in decreases in local perceptions of deprivation and dependency, and increases in community facilities, levels of participation, local capacity and confidence, internal and external social capital, livelihood opportunities and income. There was evidence of a greater degree of motivation amongst residents and the beginnings of a development that is driven and controlled by the community through a mandated organisation. Chapter Six offered a critical engagement with the findings within the context of the methodological framework of the study. Insights gained through the research, as well as emerging issues regarding aspects of the ABCD approach, were identified and discussed.

In this final chapter, seven theoretical premises of ABCD that form the conceptual framework of this thesis are revisited, some tentative conclusions drawn and further questions raised. A discussion of the applicability of the ABCD approach in developing countries is provided. Attention is focused as well on the three inter-related global development themes, foreshadowed in Chapter One, that emerged in this consideration of the ABCD approach. The chapter ends with a concluding statement.

A CONSIDERATION OF SEVEN CONCEPTUAL PREMISES OF ABCD

ABCD and Social Capital Theory

As raised in Chapter Two, social capital is viewed as an ambiguous concept with empirically questionable foundations, as well as a concept that bypasses a focus on the socio-political context and structural causes of inequality and poverty. In claiming to operationalise social capital, ABCD is likely to become a target of similar criticism. The implications point in two directions. Firstly, studies

that utilise social measurement instruments, such as sociograms, to measure changes in types and levels of social capital before, during and after an ABCD initiative might be helpful. As well as providing more quantitatively-focused data, such research might reveal further insights into the nature of social capital development and its relevance within an assets approach in the developing world. If social capital does play a crucial role in local-level development success, there is a role for outside agencies to assist in promoting its use and development, especially in communities where enabling social connections have traditionally been minimal. Secondly, a level of political analysis is required in utilising many aspects of ABCD, including social capital, so that its potential as a vibrant community development approach is not diluted by the reformist agendas of the development orthodoxy.

Development discourse has tended to neglect the spaces between people that contain interpersonal and social phenomena. They are difficult to define and quantify, and contain a level of theoretical complexity and possibly personal discomfort - for the respondent and the researcher, the practitioner and local people - that makes academic discussion problematic. Yet the content and conduct of human relationships has long been recognised as one of the most significant factors, if not *the* crucial factor, that affects the outcomes of a development initiative. Social capital has provided a useful conceptual tool for analysing at least some aspects of this important area within the ABCD initiative, in particular the social connections that resulted in benefits for the residents of the community. The concept thus has value in drawing closer attention to the human and social processes of development, a subject that will be discussed further in a later section (see page 126).

ABCD and Assets-Based Approaches

The study underlines the important role that local assets can play in community developments, particularly those inherent in human relationships. The concept of assets itself proved an effective organising concept for the ABCD implementation that was easily comprehended by residents. Although detailed investigation was beyond the scope of this research project, the call of theorists Mathie and Cunningham (2003c:8) for empirical research into the many aspects

of assets theorising is strongly supported. Such work will contribute to an understanding of the combination of assets needed for successful development, the role of different actors in mobilising assets, and the effect of changes in asset levels on the development process over time. Further insights are likely to emerge regarding the pivot role that social assets play in community development, and the institutional environment needed to support their mobilisation and development in the developing world.

ABCD and Capacities-Focused Development

As Kaplan (2000:517) has highlighted, capacity building is now an institutionalised aspect of development policy and practice because of its potential to promote local control and empowerment. In responding to the apparent contradiction between the development of capacity through a deficiency model, the ABCD approach has much to offer the developing world where deficiency orientations have tended to lead to dependency and inertia. Proponents (Kretzmann and McKnight, 1993:13; Mathie and Cunningham, 2003a:476) argue that the capacities of local residents and their associations are a crucial element in building powerful communities, and powerful communities are more likely to drive and control a development process from below. Development theorists (Brohman, 1996:219; Burkey, 1993:50-60; Oakley, 1991:118-119) claim a positive correlation between participation, capacity, self-reliance and local control. As in the case study community, the emphasis on strengths that is inherent in ABCD may genuinely assist local people to refocus on the productive potential of existing capacities, and to redefine solutions to problems as products of collaborative grassroots action.

ABCD and Needs-Based Development

The focus on needs-based development emerged from the reflections of many practitioners, genuinely concerned that top-down initiatives were not effective in assisting poor people in developing countries. Its effects in stimulating a deficiency mindset and a dependency culture were unintended and mostly unforeseen. It is likely that capacities-focused development will overtake the deficiencies-based era in the coming decades, along with other initiatives such as rights-based approaches that underline a political perspective (Harris-Curtis,

2003:560), because of their potential to stimulate pro-active and productive local level development. However, in determining a capabilities/assets outlook and focusing locals on their own problem-solving abilities, it is vital that capacities approaches do not minimise the real needs and difficulties that people in poor communities face. Bergdall (2003:3) has addressed the fine balance required, and this is especially relevant for outside catalysts that have access to higher standards of living compared to the people accessing their expertise.

ABCD and Community-Driven Development

Agency, Dependency and External Resources

One of the central tenets of ABCD is that reliance on needs analysis and external experts positions recipients as clients rather than citizens, and encourages residents to undervalue the productivity inherent in the neighbourly relationships that make up everyday life in a locality (Kretzmann and McKnight, 1993:4-5). In seeking to pre-empt an over-reliance on outsiders and to promote local control, ABCD continues a long development tradition of self-help. In promoting self-help housing in Africa in the 1980s for example, the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (1987:195-208) identified a range of success indicators, including a high level of beneficiary skill and participation, strong community organisations to manage developments and adequate institutional support. Burkey's (1993:50-51) claim that people become self-reliant when their own efforts drive the development process continues to have relevance. Outside agents must increasingly work one step back, enabling people to make decisions and instigate developments for themselves. Further research is required to pinpoint an optimal role for development practitioners in the new era of citizen-driven development.

Closely related, the study also reveals an ABCD initiative that continues the tradition of the external practitioner who enters a community to act as a catalyst for self-help development. Despite the intentions of the approach, it is hard to imagine an assets implementation in a materially poor locality without the assistance of ABCD facilitators. This raises some conceptual contradictions, for it places ABCD within the conventional development logic that contributes to the

creation of a dependency culture. Organisations that profess missions to assist others to develop are compelled to seek out potential beneficiaries, thus underscoring from the beginning an unequal alliance. Their agendas may come to dominate development initiatives and result in a range of unforeseen biases. The case study highlights perhaps the gap between the idealism of the ABCD approach as a spontaneous endogenous process, and the reality of on-the-ground circumstances in developing communities. ABCD proponents (Bergdall, 2003:1-9; Mathie and Cunningham, 2003b:12) concede that outside agency is usually required to facilitate an initial development process, but advise that it should be undertaken without engendering high levels of long-term material and psychological dependency. The establishment of an overarching local organisation is strongly recommended to address this issue, and to ensure that the development process remains locally directed, with external agencies in a support role. Overall, however, it is important that the ABCD approach seeks a middle road in this debate to avoid the pitfalls of dualism.

There is broad support amongst development theorists and practitioners for locality-based development associations (Campfens, 1997:16). As Green and Haines (2002:12,196) point out, in emphasising place they prioritise internal aims, have extensive local contacts, are controlled by local residents and can play a significant role in building local capacity. However, there remain important issues to be addressed. These centre on the capacity of community associations to appropriately access and absorb external resources, achieve adequate accountability systems, nurture leadership, deal effectively with internal conflict and maintain participation and continuity. As well, while local associations will attempt to secure outside resources, these are ultimately controlled by agents external to the locality. Within the context of developing countries, a community association may find itself competing with other communities for the assets of NGOs and national and international development agencies. Placing citizens in the driving seat may guarantee some local control, but it does not in itself guarantee low levels of dependency or future access to development resources.

Power and Control

ABCD is designed to ensure control of development by local populations. Bebbington (1999:2021 citing Sen, 1997) has argued that local people should control the rules of the development process, while Friedmann (1992:10) endorses community-based associations as one way this might be facilitated. This impeccable aim may present difficulties, however, if communities that utilise the approach do so in ways that cut across the core values or the operating principles of implementing agencies. In the case study community, power and control have not arisen as major issues to date. This is in part due to a relatively homogenous locality and an ethos of inclusive participation shared by the community members and the external agents. In a different community context, however, as in for example one characterised by a caste system, the dictum of inclusive participation could severely test the partnership between internal and external agency. As Dudley (1993:159-161) points out, community participation is undertaken in a political context and will produce political consequences. Thus, the assertion of community political will is a likely future consequence of ABCD. As Green and Haines (2002:72-73) have pointed out, there is a need for community-based organisations and their supporting agencies to come to terms with the meanings and implications of community control. Oakley's (1998:369) call for a body of disciplined evidence at the community level to address the complex and contradictory issues of power and control in community development is well founded.

Internal Conflict and Inclusive Participation

The study illustrated the phenomena, highlighted by Dore and Mars (1981:32) and Durning (1989:29), whereby community development interventions can unintentionally lead to local conflict and factional dissent by disturbing economic and social conditions. This is an important area, which requires further examination if community development initiatives such as ABCD are to succeed. It implies that practitioners maintain a high level of awareness of*here and now* social processes, and act to enable community members to address and resolve potential conflicts as they unfold.

ABCD reflects Western, egalitarian, democratic values. Although wary of charges of cultural imperialism, many development agencies overtly support these values including organisations in developing countries. Many developing nations are characterised by diverse populations or significant numbers of ethnic minorities. As a crucial component of civil society building, practitioners highlight the importance of initiatives that include all sections of a community, mobilise marginalised groups and give voice to the disenfranchised. ABCD advocates (Foster and Mathie, 2001:6; Mathie and Cunningham, 2003b:11) have highlighted the multifaceted contradictions inherent in applying the ethos of ABCD in different cultural environments. They appreciate the challenges involved, noting that entrenched power structures and varying levels of commitment in a community will influence the success of development ventures. Tadashi and Ashizawa (2001:22) note that the inclusion of historically excluded populations carries with it the prospect of unintentionally fostering divisiveness that can damage the cohesiveness of a community. However, in facilitating cross-sector dialogue focused on local capacities and development benefits for an entire community, the ABCD model does offer creative possibilities in what is frequently a challenging and delicate process. An important consideration, then, is how the approach might be initiated and maintained in a wide range of community contexts.

ABCD, Civil Society and Democracy

The study highlighted the role that members of civil society can play in community development. Although characterised by contested meanings and practical implications (Van Rooy, 1998a:12), the importance of civil society as a player in national and international affairs has become firmly established in development literature. Of particular importance is its potential as a force for political reform in developing countries, especially those where the expression of civil society has been historically underdeveloped. As has been highlighted in Chapter Three, the Philippines can be viewed as a case in point. The detailed processes whereby local civil society engagement in development will assist in the development of that civil society, and ultimately what effect such developments will have on a larger civil society and on the consolidation of democracy, is a complex subject that is likely to inspire further investigation.

In aiming to consolidate democratic governance, the ABCD approach is consistent with the general trend of international development. Networks of non-government groups are supported for their role in institutionalising the ethos of a democratic civic culture (Hudock, 1999:51). Participation in associational life is promoted as a training ground for democratic capabilities and attitudes (Burkey, 1993:69; Diamond, 1994:7-8; Dore and Mars, 1981:31). However, Green and Haines (2002:15), writing for a mostly North American development audience, maintain that participation must be learnt like any other skill, with community development offering a place for people to learn the value of co-operation and civic virtue. Although the ABCD literature is not prescriptive, maintaining that individual communities should decide the structure and operating ethos of organisations, there is an underlying assumption that the democratic ethos of Western civil society will prevail. However, ABCD does seem particularly appropriate in the Philippines where democratic governance is destabilised by entrenched socio-economic disparities and pervasive corruption. Democratic political forms are established and traditional Filipino culture is family and community orientated. Its applicability in other settings in the developing world will require thoughtful consideration on the part of local people and their support agencies.

ABCD and the Renewed Emphasis on Community Development

In aiming to support the nurturing and mobilisation of a community, ABCD expresses emerging aspirations in the revived era of community-level development. As Campfens (1997:442) and Robinson (1995:22) indicate, community development has been redefined as an interactive and collaborative process that takes place within localities and between the residents of those localities. It aims for self-direction, micro-economic enterprise, open access to knowledge, local control, and freedom from the dictates of externally-directed change. Although not fully elaborated in the ABCD literature, there is inherent support for administrative decentralisation, devolution of governance and community interconnectedness. In this sense ABCD can be viewed as attempting to reconcile the contradictions, identified by Craig (2003:3), between aspects of the neo-liberal agenda and the previous social democratic tradition that focused on addressing the rights and needs of local communities.

The current inattention to a politico-economic analysis weakens the ABCD approach. Proponents (Foster and Mathie, 2001:6; Mathie and Cunningham, 2003a:483) point out that in supporting localised and individualised development solutions, the model essentially overlooks the issue of unequal power and its associated oppressions. Advocates are open to criticism for ignoring the power of international economic and political structures to influence resource distribution and thus for depoliticising development (Harriss, 2002:111-123), or dismissed as apologists for the failures of neo-liberalism in the 1990s. In failing to address broader socio-political structures and power relationships that impact on the developing world, the approach implies that "communities can do anything". To imply that a community's circumstances are, or will be, entirely the result of its own efforts, is to ignore the wider contexts that are beyond the control of a locality. The danger for the approach then is the ease with which it can be co-opted by a neo-liberal agenda, thereby losing credibility as a community development approach with authentic empowerment aims.

ABCD IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Based on the American scenario, the ABCD approach assumes that there are underused resources in a community available for development. Green and Haines (2002:201-205) describe developing world contexts, where large-scale urbanisation, environmental degradation and widespread poverty have resulted in a lack of the basic necessities of life for many people. This context poses serious challenges to the Western-influenced assets model, and calls for dispassionate consideration and thoughtful adaptation if it is to be of serious use in the communities of developing nations. As well, Mathie and Cunningham (2003b:8 citing Moser, 1998) discuss the relevance of ABCD in communities where extreme conditions, such as entrenched poverty and endemic violence, have depleted levels of social capital, or where social stratification is ingrained to the point where sectional pursuits override community interests. Under these circumstances questions arise regarding the effectiveness of the approach in mobilising associational assets for community development. They argue that Putman's (1993, 2000) findings regarding the positive correlation between social capital, economic prosperity and social equality must be tested in a range

of social and economic contexts. This issue is particularly pertinent in the current impetus to implement ABCD in international development.

In basing development in a locality an assets approach expects that many institutional obstacles to development can be overcome through collective local action. Green and Haines (2002:11,35) point out that community development has been largely rooted in the USA experience, where a strong tradition of democratic civic involvement is well established. Developing countries tend to be more centralised than their northern counterparts, and have a younger history of civil society engagement and effective local control. There is a minimal tradition of locality-specific development, locally based NGOs and community-based organisations. In many cases, regional and national NGOs fill the gap. Green and Haines (2002:219-220) note that, although these may have similar objectives and face similar issues, there are important differences. Local residents do not usually initiate development and NGO staff members are not so much of-the-communities as for-the-communities for which they work. Green and Haines (2002:212 citing Fisher, 1998) claim that because grassroots organisations in developing countries have locally based memberships and work to develop their own communities, they come closest in form to the community-based organisations commonly found in the USA. Foster and Mathie (2001:3) report the success of the village development committee in international development. It has proven to be an effective strategy for facilitating local capacity building and for mediating between the locality and external agencies. They promote its use as a conduit for asset mapping and other methods in the ABCD tool kit.

It is important to better disseminate the nurturing and restricting conditions that affect the implementation of ABCD in developing communities, and to identify critical elements of asset-based strategies that strengthen civil society and stimulate sustainable community economic development. For example, Mathie and Cunningham (2003b:7) and Woolcock and Narayan (2000:227) note the importance of an enabling institutional environment for the utilisation of social capital. They maintain that social assets can only be capitalised in an environment that shares similar expectations of trust and reciprocity and,

therefore, must be supported by laws that respect civil liberties, honour contracts and resist corruption. There are implications for implementing agencies in creating linkages from the inside out, and in establishing an optimal relationship between internal and external agency. The study shows that for ABCD to be properly resourced in a developing country community, the partnership of an outside institution with high levels of social capital is crucial. In some respects the initiative displayed the traditional self-help deal whereby external sources provide materials and locals contribute time and labour. However, the development of ongoing capacity and agency in the community did address some of these issues. Aid agencies are thought to respond positively to requests for assistance that come from communities who are seen to be taking the development initiative and this was and is the case in the research community.

ABCD AND GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT THEMES

Three important and overlapping themes from alternative development discourse have emerged in the course of this study into the application of ABCD in developing countries. These concepts, foreshadowed in the introductory chapter, encompass the development of capacity, the notion of development as a process-oriented endeavour with particular emphasis on social processes, and the meaning of empowerment. In this next section, various aspects of these larger themes are developed further and some implications discussed for future development practice.

Capacity Development: What Capacities? Whose Development?

The utilisation and development of individual and collective capacity, an essential theme of people-centred development, is the cornerstone of ABCD as originally conceived of by Kretzmann and McKnight (1993). Cunningham et al. (2003:1) position it as a central aspect of the approach as it is being adapted for application in the developing world. The study has provided evidence that the growth of capabilities on the part of local people has had empowering consequences beyond the narrower instrumental purposes of better skills for better development. The development of human capacity is a unique individual process. It may be expressed through an increased sense of personal

empowerment, heightened self-confidence and self-efficacy, and in other individually distinctive ways. The effects can be viewed as ripple-like, emanating from the individual to others with whom they relate and influencing the wider social system beyond, building the social world of development from the bottom-up. This micro-level view of capacity building, as illustrated by the workings of the ABCD initiative in the research community, tends to get lost in the wider macro-level machinations of the development industry. Attention is required to utilise the potential of capacity building to move development ever closer to a people-centred endeavour.

Although this project did not set out to study the particularities of development practice, its findings do draw attention to the capacity of practitioners. Kaplan (2000:517-526) has highlighted the development of personal and professional flexibility so practitioners are able to respond uniquely to each distinctive individual and group, and effectively facilitate a learning objective with conceptual and operational adaptability. He notes in particular the development of an integrated persona, a systems analyst's insight and an ability to read the tangible and intangible aspects of complex and ambiguous development situations. Chambers (1983, 1997) proposed reversals whereby the focus of development projects moved from professionals to recipients, and implied a respectful practice that sought to understand the realities of local people.

Learning in the Western contemporary context is perhaps best understood as taking place within a relationship between teacher and student, and the findings of this study signpost an understanding of the capacity-building practitioner as firmly located within that relationship. However, learning can also be viewed as the result of a complex parallel process that takes place between facilitator and recipient. The implications for practice are significant in that practitioners are required to participate in a development learning partnership with the recipients of their work. In particular they are required to understand how their values and actions affect the learning relationship and its outcomes, and how their involvement affects the wider social systems in which they work. An inevitable result of an empowerment approach is that direction is not imposed, but emerges.

Social Process: Central to Development

A focus on the content of human interaction is perhaps one logical consequence of the journey from top-down, reductive, macro-level development to bottom-up, deductive, micro-level diversity. Development theory and practice has tended to neglect or overlook social processes and human relationships, perhaps because they elude straightforward quantification, analysis and management. In describing the detail and outcomes of ABCD practice in the research community, the study underlines the centrality of the social processes of development in terms of intrinsic aims and results. As one practitioner noted in the course of this research, "it is the stuff of human relationships that can make or break a development initiative". As well, process orientation implies that intrinsic qualities that are unnamed and unappreciated are given space to develop. Kaplan (2002) proposes full attention to social process as holistic and dynamic, to be approached by participant-observer practitioners with high levels of active self-awareness, intuition and imagination. These last two qualities will assist development to transcend its former incarnations, evolve beyond its top-down inheritance, and become effective as a human-centred, process-oriented endeavour.

Empowerment: Contested but Critical

Local empowerment emerges from this study as an essential aim of ABCD. Harrison (2001:24), describing collaborative development programmes with indigenous peoples, delineates at least three levels at which community empowerment can be conceived - empowerment within existing political structures to expand inclusive participation and therefore pre-empt radicalisation, empowerment to increase self-determination and empowerment as sovereignty. This is a major issue in contemporary Aotearoa/New Zealand, where indigenous tribes and non-Maori are attempting to come to terms with the meanings of empowerment for Maori. Empowerment is characterised by profound tensions between instrumental and intrinsic purposes, and by ambiguous, multi-layered processes of power and control at a myriad of levels. Many developing world communities are characterised by entrenched social divisions, and high levels of material, political and psychological disempowerment. As ABCD and other similar initiatives are adapted to

developing country contexts, these issues are likely to come increasingly into view. It is important, therefore, that genuine development initiatives, while acknowledging and attempting to address issues of power and control, do not become stymied by the sheer complexity of the debate. This study has shown that approaches such as ABCD can continue to be refined and offer worthwhile ways forward for the benefit of local people in poor communities in the developing world. The people of Midkiwan would be the first to agree that the ABCD development initiative in their community has left them better off, more empowered and more able to determine a development process for themselves. One of the purposes of development is the empowerment of the disempowered, and it is crucial that we continue the impetus despite, and indeed because of, its problematic nature.

ABCD IN CONCLUSION

As an answer to the dilemma posed by the deficiency/dependency outcomes of needs- and problems-based development approaches, the potential of ABCD can be easily appreciated. It encompasses a potential radicalism and elicits favourable responses from many that come to hear about it. By utilising concepts such as social capital, capacity building, the agency of civil society and empowerment, ABCD also contributes to a potential depoliticisation of development. It can be viewed as serving a neo-liberal "do it yourself" agenda that promotes the devolution of state responsibilities to local levels, and economic liberalisation and globalisation in the interests of the already powerful. In this sense, it is a near-perfect fit in Adams' (2001:334) neo-populist category, "a strange marriage of neo-classical economic thinking and community-based development". It is important, therefore, that assets theorists pay attention to political analysis, and maintain a variety and a balance between instrumental and intrinsic purposes. The question is can community development approaches, and more specifically ABCD, integrate a process and product orientation while maintaining credibility, a politico-economic analysis, *and* clear sights on local empowerment as the "raison d'être" of development? However, as Kaplan (2000:525) reminds us, development work requires us to live with questions. "The certainty of answers dampens our edge".

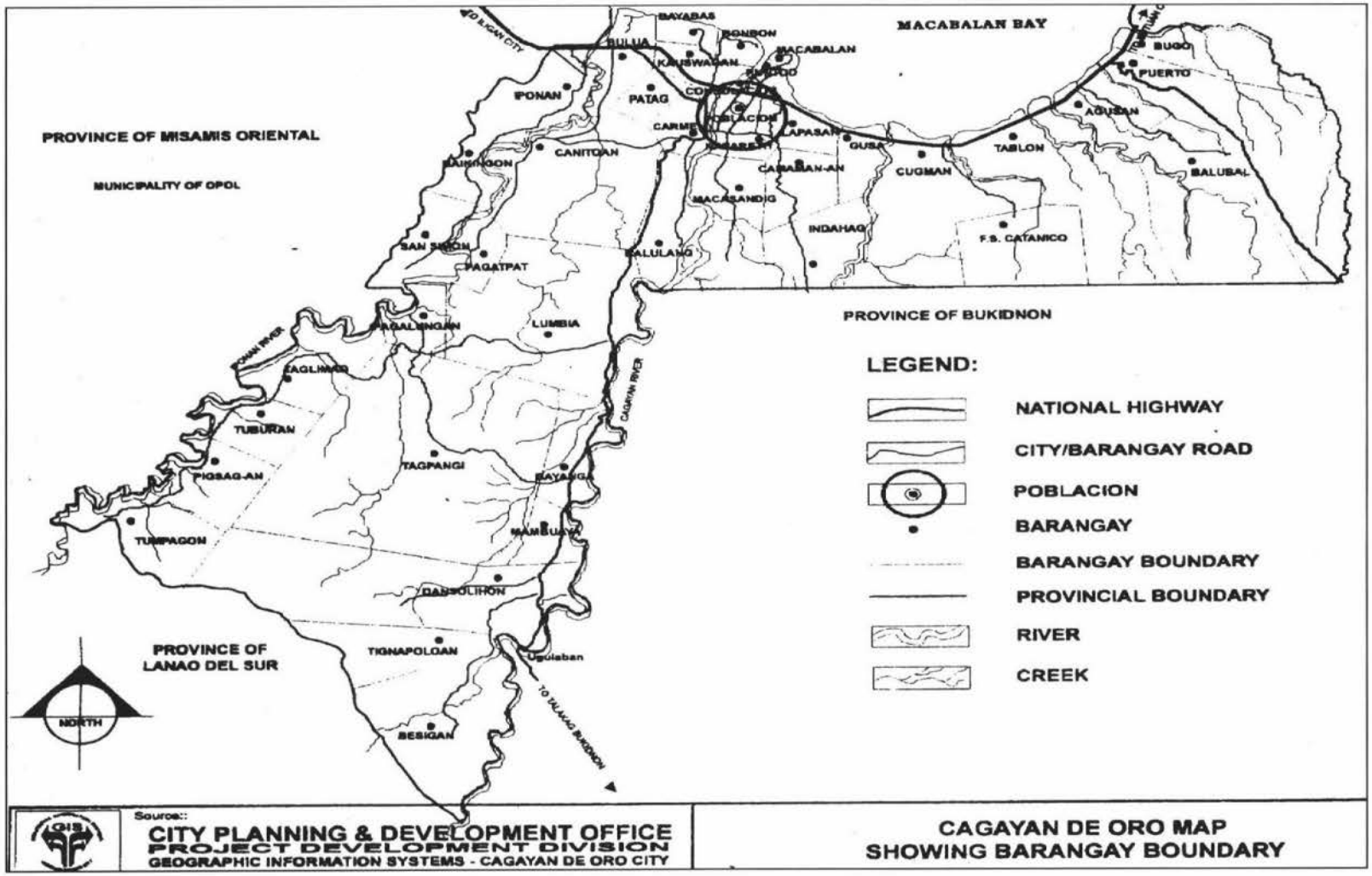
APPENDIX ONE: THE CURRENT STATUS OF RESEARCH INTO ABCD

Staff members of the Coady Institute in Nova Scotia are leading research into asset-based approaches to community development in two related areas of inquiry (Mathie and Cunningham, 2003c:7).

In collaboration with international partners, examples of initiatives operating from a similar philosophy as ABCD are being explored. Research focuses on discovering the mix of assets required, and the role of various actors in mobilising those assets in various contexts. Of particular importance for the NGOs and local government agencies that have traditionally overseen development projects for communities, is the identification of policies that encourages locally-driven development. There is also interest in investigating how endogenous initiatives can serve as models for future development practice.

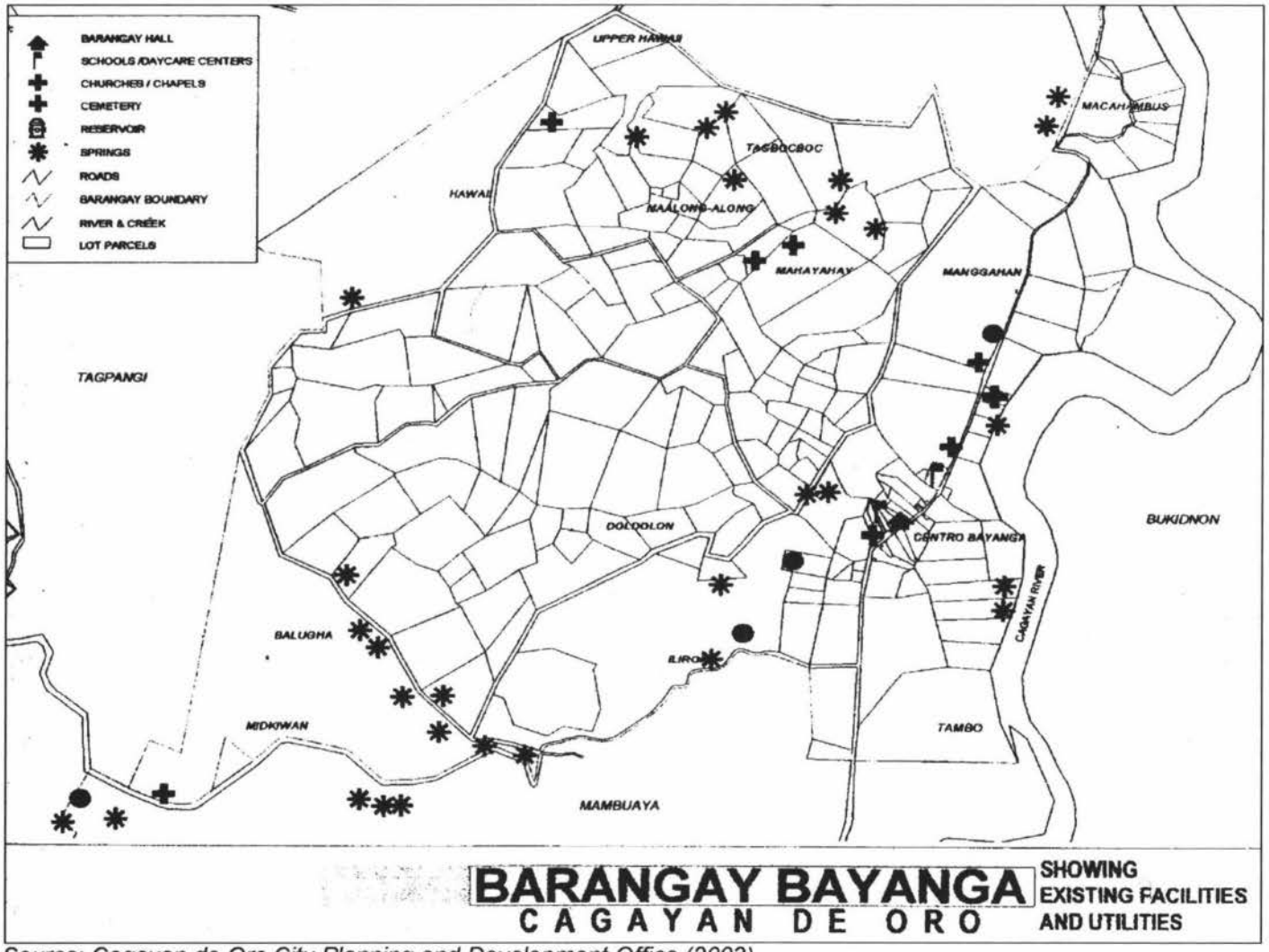
The Coady Institute has also invited agencies considering shifting their practice to ABCD, to be partners in documenting the process as it unfolds through ongoing monitoring and evaluation. The research aims to disseminate the key fostering and constraining conditions that affect the implementation of ABCD at the micro- and macro-levels. Researchers wish to identify an optimal role for the NGO in the community, and its relationship to other external agencies such as local government when introducing the ABCD approach at the community level. There is a desire to discover the local adaptations of ABCD needed to maximise the effectiveness of the approach in stimulating community-determined development. The research seeks to discover the extent to which a sustainable improvement in livelihoods can be realised when residents cease being dependent clients of NGOs and instead take up the role of interdependent citizens. It aims to identify a policy environment conducive to the development of communities from "the inside out", and identify critical elements of asset-based strategies that create linkages, strengthen civil society and stimulate sustainable community economic development (Mathie and Cunningham, 2003c:8).

APPENDIX TWO: MAP OF CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY SHOWING THE LOCATION OF BARANGAY BAYANGA



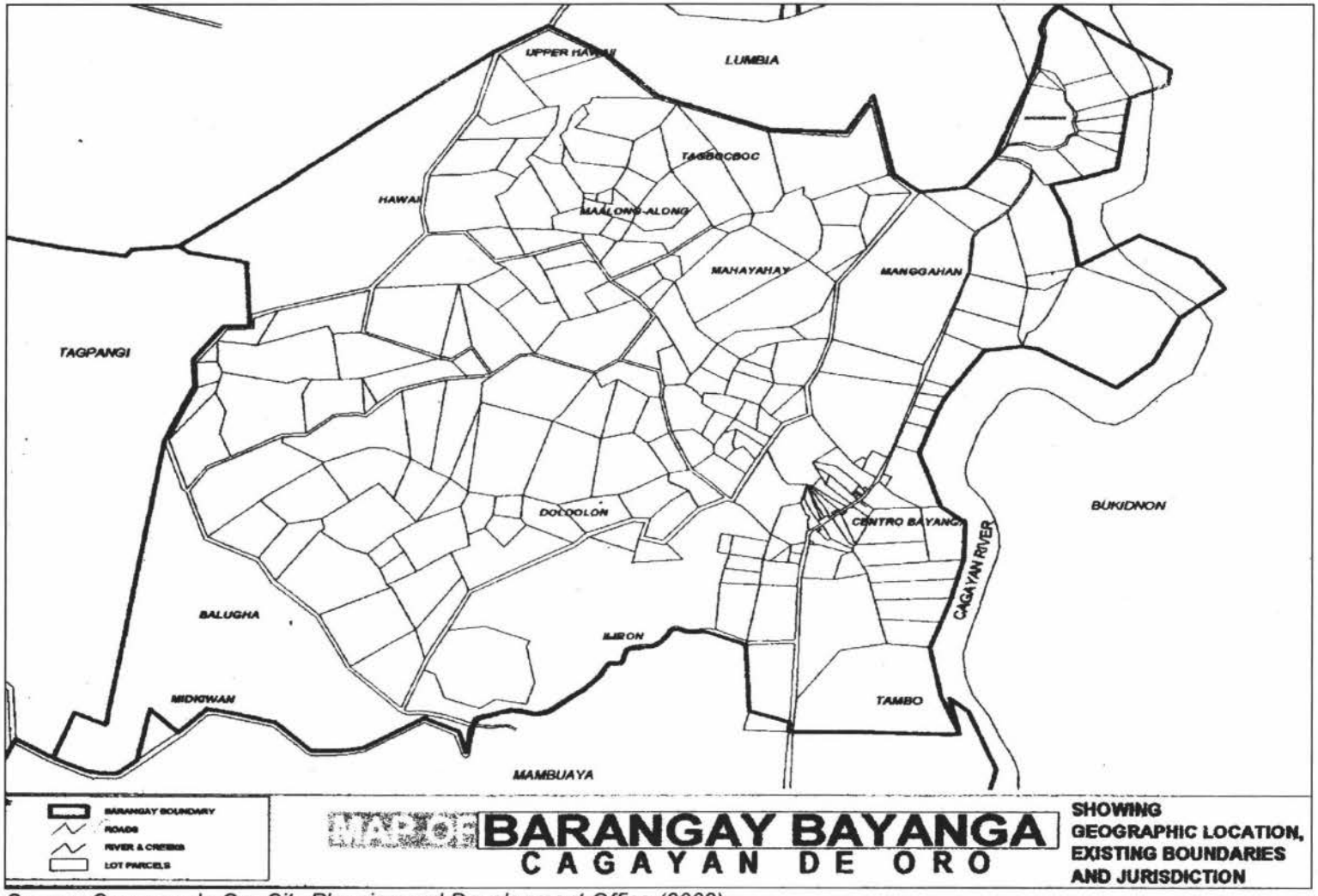
Source: Cagayan de Oro City Planning and Development Office (2003)

APPENDIX THREE: MAP OF BARANGAY BAYANGA SHOWING EXISTING FACILITIES AND UTILITIES



Source: Cagayan de Oro City Planning and Development Office (2003)

APPENDIX FOUR: MAP OF BARANGAY BAYANGA SHOWING THE LOCATION OF SITIO MIDKIWAN



Source: Cagayan de Oro City Planning and Development Office (2003)

APPENDIX FIVE: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR ABCD PRACTITIONERS

1. What is your understanding of ABCD?
2. How did you first hear about ABCD?
3. Have you been involved in any community development approaches? If so, please describe them.
4. Have you utilised the ABCD approach? If so, please describe the process.
5. What resulted from this initiative?
6. Please comment on the main features of the ABCD model in terms of objectives, implementation and outcomes.
    - Appreciative story-telling
    - Community vision-building
    - Community asset-counting
    - The development of plans by linking and utilising assets
    - The implementation of plans
    - The leveraging of external resources
    - The foundation of a community development organisation
7. The ABCD model is presented as a series of steps. In what sequence was the model implemented? How well did that work?
8. PRA is utilised as an asset-counting tool. How important is PRA to the ABCD process?
9. Did you make any changes or adaptations as you were implementing the ABCD approach? If so, describe them and your reasons for changes.
10. What role should external agents play in an ABCD initiative and why?
11. ABCD aims to utilise and develop social capital in a community. How is that realised? How successful is ABCD in achieving that goal?
12. ABCD aims to promote unified motivation for development in a community. How is that realised? How successful is ABCD in achieving that goal?
13. ABCD aims to utilise and develop local capacity in a community. How is that realised? How successful is ABCD in achieving that goal?
14. ABCD aims to hand over control of development to a community. How is that realised? How successful is ABCD in achieving that goal?

15. The ABCD approach aims to initiate improvements that can be sustained over time. How does that work? How successful is that aim in your view?
16. Do you consider the ABCD approach to be beneficial? If so, in what ways?
17. Do you consider there to be any limitations of the ABCD approach? If so, please explain?
18. What do you consider the relevant merits of the needs-based and asset-based approaches to be?
19. Based on your experience, would you change any aspects of the ABCD approach? If so, why?
20. Do you intend to use the ABCD approach in the future? If so, where and how?

APPENDIX SIX: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR KEY INFORMANTS REGARDING THE ABCD IMPLEMENTATION IN MIDKIWAN

1. What were your impressions of Midkiwan before the ABCD initiative there, in terms of social, cultural and economic conditions, and in terms of motivation for development?
2. Please tell me about previous development initiatives in this community.
3. How did the ABCD initiative come about?
4. How was ABCD implemented in this community?
5. The ABCD model is presented as a series of steps. In what order were the ABCD steps undertaken and what was the rationale for this?
6. The ABCD process began by focusing on successes. What success stories were produced? What resulted from that? How would you assess this activity?
7. A vision-building activity was conducted. What visions were produced? What resulted from that? How would you assess this activity?
8. An asset-counting activity was conducted. What assets were identified? What resulted from that? How would you assess this activity?
9. PRA was utilised to implement the asset-counting activity. How useful was PRA in identifying community assets?
10. What roles did internal and external catalysts play in the ABCD implementation? Please explain.
11. Have any internal and external links been made during the implementation of ABCD. If so, please explain them and how they came about.
12. The ABCD implementation aimed to improve community facilities, livelihood opportunities, income levels and local skills. What has resulted so far?
13. ABCD aims to initiate improvements that can be sustained over time. What is your view regarding the sustainability of any improvements that have been made to date?
14. Please tell me what you know about MICODA - its initiators, formation, structure, progress to date, successes, stability, challenges and future direction.
15. ABCD aims to develop motivation for development in a community. What has resulted so far?

16. ABCD aims to hand over control of development to the community. To what extent has this occurred?
17. Have any issues or concerns associated with the ABCD project arisen? If so, please explain.
18. What would you recommend as a future direction for this community?
19. If you were to repeat the ABCD process, would you change anything? If so, please explain.
20. What other reflections do you have?

APPENDIX SEVEN: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR ABCD PARTICIPANTS

Personal Information

- Name
- Age
- Gender
- Occupation
- Marital status
- Household constitution
- Place of origin
- Length of time in community
- Organisations belonged to
- Official community positions held
- ABCD participant group

Questions

1. The ABCD process began by focusing on community successes? What success stories were produced? How would you assess this activity?
2. A vision-building activity was conducted. What visions were produced? How would you assess this activity?
3. An asset-counting activity was conducted to identify strengths and resources. What assets were identified? How would you assess this activity?
4. The ABCD process led to the drawing up of community development plans? What plans were made? How would you assess this activity?
5. Were you involved in making links within the community or to outside organisations? If so, please tell me about them.
6. Were any external resources obtained for the ABCD project? If so, please tell me about them. How were they sought? Were you directly involved? If so, how?
7. A community development organisation has been formed. Has this been helpful? If so, how? If not, why not?
8. Have you joined MICODA? If so, why? If not, why not?
9. What effects has the ABCD project had on you? Please elaborate.

10. What effects has the ABCD project had on the community? Please elaborate.
11. Did you contribute to the community projects? If so, how? If not, why not?
12. Have you joined any new organisations as a result of the ABCD initiative? If so, which ones and why?
13. ABCD aims to strengthen community relationships. Have you noticed any strengthening here resulting from the ABCD programme? If so, how is this expressed? If not, why not?
14. ABCD aims to increase a community's motivation for development. Have you noticed any increase here resulting from the ABCD programme? If so, how is this expressed? If not, why not?
15. Have any issues or concerns arisen during the ABCD initiative? If so, please tell me about them.
16. The ABCD process aims to initiate improvements that a community can sustain. What is your view regarding the recent developments here?
17. Who do you see as determining the development process here in Midkiwan? Please elaborate.
18. What do you see as a good future direction for the community? Please elaborate.
19. If you were to score the ABCD programme, what score would you give? 1=poor, 2=fair, 3=good, 4=very good, 5=excellent. Please explain the rationale for the score you awarded.
20. Do you have any other reflections or comments regarding the ABCD programme in Midkiwan?

APPENDIX EIGHT: MIDKIWAN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION (MICODA)

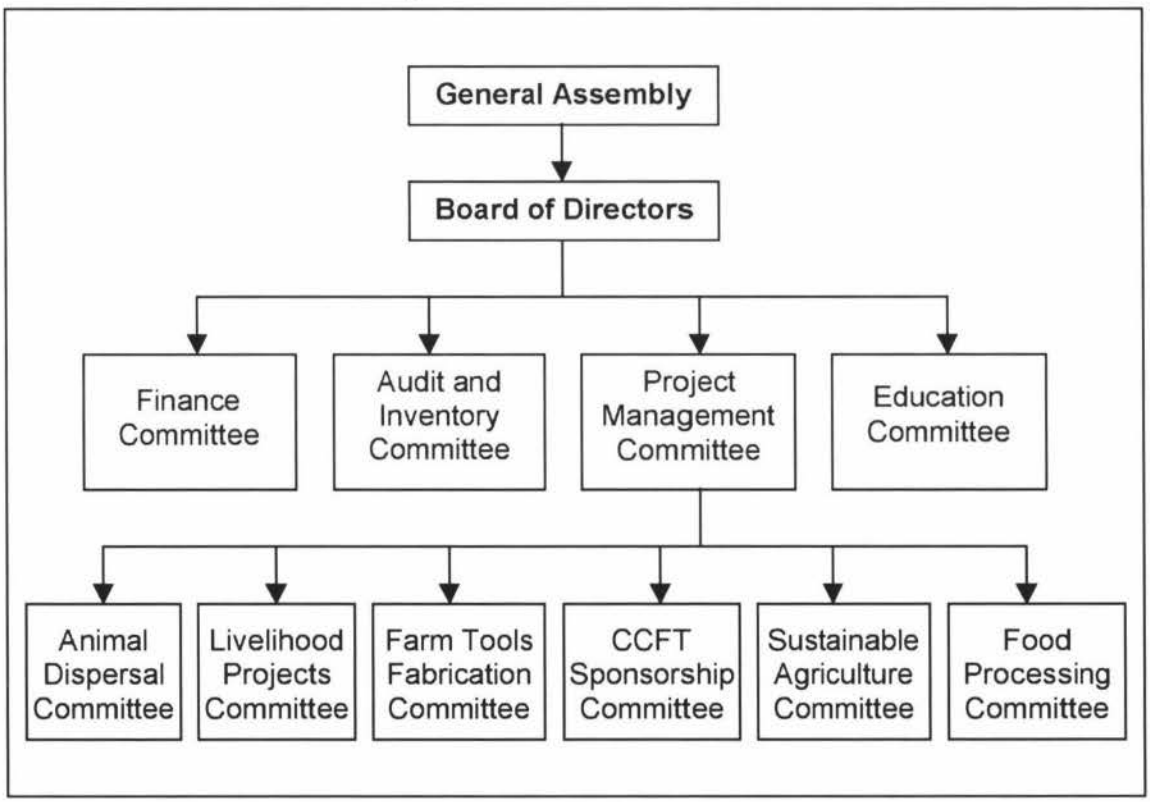
Mission

- To increase family income
- To uplift the level of educational attainment
- To increase farm production
- To increase community spirit and a sense of unity
- To fulfil a desire for community development
- To facilitate cooperation of time and labour

Structure

The structure of MICODA is represented graphically in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Structure of MICODA



Source: Nacalaban (2004:3).

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